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Space Invaders

Time Magazine, July 12, 1999

By Sylvester Monroe/Eatonton

Strangers from the North send a Southern town into a tizzy "I am the lamb, I am the man," declares Dr. Malachi Z. York, 54, on his website. "I am the Supreme Being of This Day and Time, God in Flesh." And by the way, says the native of the planet Rizq, a spaceship is coming on May 5, 2003, to scoop up believers. The believers have been making quite a spectacle in the tiny town of Eatonton, Ga. (pop. 5,000), seat of the not much larger Putnam County (pop. 17,000). There, the man born Dwight York, of Sullivan County, N.Y., decreed the founding of Tama-Re, Egypt of the West, a 19-acre evocation of the ancient land, complete with 40-ft. pyramids, obelisks, gods, goddesses and a giant sphinx. It is the holy see of the Nuwaubians.

But don't call them a religion. The Nuwaubians describe themselves as a "fraternal organization" of people of different religions, including Christians, Muslims and others who just happen to share a few extra tenets.

Says Marshall Chance, head of the Nuwaubians' Holy Tabernacle Ministries:

"The main thing that brings us together is fellowship and facts." Among those facts: that black people are genetically superior to whites and that the Nuwaubians are direct descendants of Egyptians who, having walked from the Nile Valley to the Americas before continental drift separated the landmasses, are actually the original Native Americans. York and several hundred of his followers wandered from New York to Georgia in 1993, buying up 476 acres of land on the perimeter of Eatonton for \$575,000. And now, as a tribe of Native Americans, the Nuwaubians believe they can argue for being a sovereign people not subject to local or state jurisdiction. Not so fast, say officials in Putnam County. They have just emerged from a long

wrangle with York over building-code violations in Tama-Re. And prominent citizens are smarting from the words of a leaflet campaign the "fraternal organization" inflicted on them. Among those criticized was county commissioner Sandra Adams, whom the Nuwaubians called a "house n_____." "They feel because I am black and they are black I should be in their corner," says Adams. "But I have to obey the law, and so do they." Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills, another object of Nuwaubian ire, says he fears that young people are being held against their will. "No one in Georgia has ever dealt with anything like this," he says. "You only draw parallels to Waco, and I don't want a Waco. This is a cult." A Nuwaubian spokesman scoffs at the idea:

"There is no one being held on Tama-Re against their will. No one is allowed to move to Tama-Re that is under 18. The children that are here belong to grown adults who have made the choice to be Nuwaubians. Nuwaubians are insulted when they are confronted with accusations that they are brainwashed or are being told by one man what to do." But don't they believe in the spaceship? Says Minister Chance: "Some of us do, and some of us don't."

Few Nuwaubians speak to the press on the record. Those who do are proud of the group. "You are here on the land," a Nuwaubian man said pointedly to a reporter in Tama-Re. "Do you see a cult or a compound? We are just people who have come together in love and peace." Still, the Nuwaubians, who now call themselves the Yamassee Native American Moors of the Creek Nation, are increasingly high profile in local politics. They have enrolled their children in public schools, registered to vote and joined local branches of civil rights organizations en masse. About 125 of the 550 members of the Putnam County N.A.A.C.P. are Nuwaubians. The people in the county, 30% black and 70% white, expect the Nuwaubians to flex their muscle at the polls any time now. "They're the nicest people," says a young white waitress at Rusty's, a small diner in downtown Eatonton. "But I'm afraid they are trying to take over the town."

Tensions Simmer Around a Black Sect in Georgia

New York Times, June 29, 1999

By Tom Lassete

When members of a black religious group moved here from Brooklyn in 1993, their purchase of 438 acres of pasture about 10 miles outside town stirred up gossip and some apprehension, but residents were more curious than frightened.

A few years later, with the completion of a 40-foot-high black pyramid on the land that belonged to the group, which is known as the Yamassee Native American Nuwaubians, most neighbors in this small dairy-farming town east of Atlanta scratched their heads and figured it would be best to keep their distance.

But in 1997, when the Nuwaubians declared themselves a separate nation and began issuing passports and organizing armed security patrols of their property, Sheriff Howard B. Sills of Putnam County decided to take a closer look. A copy of a 1993 Federal Bureau of Investigations report he received, linking the Nuwaubians' New York operations to welfare fraud and extortion, also concerned him.

Then, Sheriff Sills learned that the group's spiritual leader, Dwight Z. York, was a convicted felon. Mr. York has admitted he served three years in prison in the 1960's for resisting arrest, assault and possession of a dangerous weapon.

He is known among the Nuwaubians as the Master Teacher Dr. Malachi York, who founded the Nuwaubians sect on a combination of Islamic, Christian and Hebrew teachings. Mr. York says he is an extraterrestrial being from the galaxy Illyuwn. He and many in his group say they expect a spacecraft from Illyuwn to visit

Earth in 2003 and to take with it 144,000 chosen people, a number they do not explain.

The front of the compound, which Nuwaubians refer to as the Egypt of the West, contains eight-foot-high statues of ancient Egyptian gods and goddesses placed among columns covered with hieroglyphics, and a sphinx and several smaller pyramids about 24 feet in height.

"These are the last days, and we Nuwaubians have created God's kingdom right here on Earth," said Marshall C. Chance Jr., president of the group's Holy Tabernacle Industries.

The similarities between the Nuwaubians and the 39 members of the Heaven's Gate sect in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., who committed mass suicide in March 1997, were too close to ignore, Sheriff Sills said. The Heaven's Gate group, like the Nuwaubians, said they believed that a spacecraft would come to save them.

At least 150 people live on the Nuwaubian property, and tensions between Putnam County authorities and the Nuwaubians have steadily increased in the last two years. In the last few months, there have been several standoffs between Nuwaubian guards and the sheriff's department, when deputies were barred from the property. In April, for example, when Sheriff Sills tried to deliver a court order concerning zoning violations, two Nuwaubian guards, wearing 9-millimeter pistols on their hips, stood in front of his car and would not let it pass, Sheriff Sills said.

The confrontations stem in part from three county lawsuits filed in the last year against the Nuwaubians, charging the group with zoning violations and violations of building regulations. The Nuwaubians were operating a large nightclub on their land, zoned for agricultural use, and were planning to open, among other businesses, a health-food store, a bar, a recording studio and a taxicab company.

Mr. York refused to appear in court and was ordered to be tried for contempt of court on Tuesday for not appearing at previous hearings

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on zoning violations.

He declined to be interviewed.

Over the weekend, thousands of Nuwaubian followers drove by the dairy farms, fruit stands and bait shops of Eatonton to attend the annual Savior Day's Festival at the Nuwaubian compound, which celebrated Mr. York's birthday on June 26. Because Sheriff Sills padlocked some of the compound's buildings, acting on a court order in the zoning disputes, the event, also known as the Djed Festival, was held outdoors, in continual rainstorms.

"It's a utopia," said Mr. Chance, who wears a priestly black shirt and pants with a white collar. When asked if he was ordained by any particular denomination, Mr. Chance replied that he was "ordained and called by God himself."

That sort of religious fervor has raised concerns among state and Federal officials. Department of Justice representatives from the community dispute resolution offices in Atlanta have been in Eatonton since last Wednesday, trying to bring the county and the Nuwaubians to the same table to reduce tensions.

The conflict in Putnam County, and its potential for disorder, even violence, led Gov. Roy Barnes to call Sheriff Sills last week to discuss the situation.

Last Wednesday, a bench warrant for Mr. York's arrest on contempt of court charges, was withdrawn when Mr. York's lawyer promised that his client would appear in court on Tuesday, June 29.

"There is an atmosphere of tension," said Ernie Stallworth, a mediator for the Justice Department. "The Nuwaubians feel they have been unfairly harassed since they've been down there."

A lawyer for the Nuwaubians, Leroy B. Johnson, said he thought local, white government officials should be more tolerant of the group's endeavors, but he acknowledged that predominantly white Putnam County might not

be the most suitable place for a black religious group to build pyramids.

Driving into the county, motorists see signs inviting people to join the local chapter of Sons of Confederate Veterans, and the county has an annual 10-kilometer race, once known to locals as the Tar Baby Run in celebration of Joel Chandler Harris, a white native of Eatonton who wrote the Br'er Rabbit folktales.

"There has to be a realization by the Government there that the situation is a powder keg, where the drop of a hat or a miscalculated word can incite violence," Mr. Johnson, a former state senator, said in a telephone interview.

At the festival, people from as far as Trinidad and London came to honor Mr. York. Visitors walked the small labyrinth surrounding the main pyramid, praying with tracts written by Mr. York, who has written at least 200 of them.

Many in the crowd were wearing clerical robes and ancient-Egyptian-style headdresses, spoke in bits of Nuwabic, a blend of Arabic and English also invented by Mr. York, who appeared briefly on Saturday, surrounded by five guards and hundreds of admirers.

None of those living on the property, other than a spokeswoman and Mr. Chance, would comment on their organization. Many of the women had shaved heads, with a single braid on the right side, in honor of a Mother Nature-like deity.

The Nuwaubians' move from Brooklyn, where the group was known as both the Holy Tabernacle of the Most High and the Children of Abraham, Mr. Chance said, was driven by rivalries with Islamic organizations in New York that objected to the group's borrowing of several Muslim traditions, he said.

When asked how the group managed to buy its land and finance the construction, Mr. Chance gave a faint smile, and said, "We attract people who already have something with them."

Black Sect Pledges To Cooperate

The Associated Press, June 30, 1999

EATONTON, Ga. (AP) - A mostly black religious group whose spiritual leader claims to be an extraterrestrial pledged greater cooperation with anxious neighbors and local authorities.

The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, who claim to be descended from Egyptians, occupy a 476-acre tract in Putman County east of Atlanta. After a two-hour meeting on Tuesday, called by a judge hearing a contempt case, group leader Dwight York said he is optimistic he and county officials can resolve their disputes over zoning and other matters.

"Peace is made," York said to cheers from hundreds of supporters who filled the courtroom or stood in the rain and prayed on the courthouse lawn. Hundreds of law enforcement officers were also on hand, as well as a helicopter and an armored personnel carrier.

The Nuwaubians have said their difficulties with the predominantly white county stem from discrimination.

The group arrived in 1993 from New York City and has since constructed a 40-foot-high black pyramid with statues of Egyptian gods and goddesses on the grounds.

York had been charged with contempt of court after armed guards prevented the sheriff and county building inspector from entering the community to carry out a court order in April. The county had filed several lawsuits accusing the Nuwaubians of violating zoning and building regulations.

Hostilities intensified to the point where representatives from the Department of Justice tried to intervene to mediate, and Gov. Roy Barnes called the sheriff for a briefing on the situation.

At Tuesday's court hearing, York declined to answer where he lived and invoked his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. That prompted Judge Hugh Wingfield III to ask everyone but the principals to clear the courtroom.

"I want to move beyond the contempt hearings and get to the meat of the matter," Wingfield said.

Ralph Goldberg, one of York's lawyers, said the Nuwaubians would go forward with the permitting process.

"We agreed to stop attacking each other, and, for lack of a better word, we aired some concerns," he said.

Wingfield did not rule on the contempt charge against York.

York has claimed he's from another galaxy and promises that ships are going to descend from the sky in the year 2003 to pick up a chosen 144,000 people for rebirth as supreme beings.

Such predictions about spacecraft remind some of the group's neighbors of the Heaven's Gate sect in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., who committed mass suicide in 1997.

Accusations Of Racism

The Macon Telegraph, August 8, 1999

By Hilary Hilliard and Rob Peecher

Throughout the legal disputes, the Nuwaubians have lobbed accusations of racism and religious persecution, leaving county officials angry and defensive.

"It's a group of black separatists who believe white people are genetically inferior mutants," said Dorothy Adams, an attorney for Putnam County. "They try to make us look like a bunch of big-bellied rednecks."

McDade called those claims ridiculous, saying that although the group is predominantly black, it includes members who are white, Asian and of other descent.

"We don't see this as a black-white issue," McDade said. "It's a matter of religious persecution."

But despite what is said in interviews, commissioner Sandra Adams said the Nuwaubians have repeatedly made race an issue. Adams, who is black, said she has been called a "house nigger" by Nuwaubian protesters.

"They do not want to solve these problems; they want to call attention to themselves," said Sandra Adams, who is not related to the county's attorney. "When the racism card is played, everybody stops what they're doing and converges on little old Putnam County."

National publications from Time magazine to the New York Times have covered the Nuwaubian issue this summer.

And while she believes racism still exists throughout the United States, Sandra Adams said it is not an issue in the Putnam community.

The four voting members of the Putnam commission are evenly split - Poole and Steve Layson are white, Sandra Adams and Jimmy Davis are black. Chairman Ralph Perdomo is white, but votes only to break ties.

"It is not my concern who they pray to or what color they are, just that they are citizens of Putnam County," Perdomo said. "I will bend over backwards to assist any citizen, but I won't break the law."

But the commissioners are aware of just how different the Nuwaubians are from traditional Putnam residents.

"There are going to continue to be ripples all along the way because they are a cult," Poole said.

"I don't care what they say, that's not the norm in a society, and we're a small town."

Chance said it is difficult to continue to believe that county officials are supportive in the face of the legal stalemate they have reached. In the case of the alleged nightclub, which the Nuwaubians call the Ramses Social Club, Chance said the group spent months trying to have the building rezoned, but were never given clear directions from the county.

"They gave us a list of 19 violations of the club," Chance said, "then padlocked it before we could fix them."

Keeping the Peace

Sills sees himself as the man in the middle, charged with keeping things cool.

"I have been willfully obstructed and opposed by armed individuals, and I have simply turned around and left, even with court orders," Sills said. "It is my professional opinion that they are desperately seeking a confrontation."

Sills said he has overridden department policies, forgone arrests and not responded to threats and behavior that would land other citizens in jail, all

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in the interest of preventing a showdown. He said he has ordered his deputies not to stop Nuwaubian drivers for minor violations such as license plate problems, or for speeding at less than 75 mph.

"There are lots of things I could arrest them for that I have not," Sills said. "I accept responsibility for not doing that, but police discretion is something I have. I don't want an armed confrontation ever."

But Sills is losing patience with the group that, despite his pains, has called him a "demon" and, he said, threatened him. Sills takes the threats so seriously that he no longer lets his children stay in his home overnight.

"I've done it under an onslaught, never seen in this state, of propaganda slandering me, and I've never raised my voice," Sills said.

Sills has however appeared in a New York television news report about the Nuwabians and has compared the group to other well-known cult organizations.

Sills said the group - which he calls "the so-called Nuwaubians" - presents no real threat to members of the public, outside of law enforcement.

Political Threat?

Government officials, however, do perceive a potential political threat from the Nuwaubians as their numbers continue to grow in the region.

In a taped speech, York said the group would establish an independent nation with passports, taxes and laws on the Putnam County land. Members already carry those passports, which grant them access to the land.

"I have a problem with them wanting to take over," said commissioner Sandra Adams. "If they're not going to follow the established laws, do I have to follow the laws they put in place? Does that leave me at their mercy or do I have to

pack up my little bongos and boogie out of town?"

The Nuwaubians, whose published literature extols American government and demands loyalty to the country, deny any desire to establish a sovereign nation and said York's comments were taken out of context. Chance said York was speaking of creating a theme park similar to Disney parks in Florida or California.

"We did not come as a political threat," Chance said. "We have had the FBI and GBI here. If we were lawbreakers, we would not ask for help from the federal government."

One of their cornerstone publications, "Little Guide Book for Nuwaubians," reprints the entire U.S. Constitution. The same book, which includes rules for Nuwaubians, forbids disorderly conduct and demands total cooperation with police.

Perdomo dismissed concerns of a political threat. Tama-Re is in the same voting district as Lake Sinclair, which Perdomo said is the fastest-growing district in the county and therefore unlikely to feel much political impact from the Nuwaubians.

But they have already made their presence felt in local political groups. Some 125 of the 550 members of the Putman County NAACP are Nuwaubians, giving them a voice in the group.

"If they do take over," Poole said, "a lot of people will move out."

End Game

The heart of the problem, according to Poole and Perdomo, is that the Nuwaubians lack the technical expertise to build and win approval for their developments.

Progress has been smoother when the Nuwaubians have enlisted the help of expert contractors and engineers, but commissioners said those experts have not been used on a

consistent enough basis to solve the disagreements.

The Nuwaubians are still petitioning for permits that would legitimate the padlocked buildings and clear the way for future building. But McDade is concerned that there may not be an end in sight.

"What is the next reason for saying 'no' to the Nuwaubians?" she asked.

Whenever it does come, Perdomo said there is only one possible outcome.

"It's going to end with them obeying our laws," he said. "That's the only way it can end."

Eatonton site raises a lot of questions

Macon Telegraph, August 8, 1999
By Matthew I. Pinzur

EATONTON - There is a 473-acre plot outside Eatonton that has brought unheard of conflict and dissent to the rural community, and no one can even agree on what to call it.

To visitors, it is called a curiosity, memorable for its colorful Egyptian monuments, stories-high pyramids and the medley of music that pours past the gates.

To some in local government and law enforcement, it is called a compound, stirring images of the cultish separatists in places like Waco and Ruby Ridge.

To the hundreds of people who live on or frequent it, this is Tama-Re, or simply, The Land. The Nuwaubian Nation of Moors came to Putnam County in 1993, believing the area is

equal parts native birthright, religious shrine and natural homeland.

Whatever it is called, it has given rise to tension in Middle Georgia. A rural Southern community with shared deep roots, Southern traditions and a population that's about 63 percent white and 37 percent black, Putnam County now is forced to confront its own feelings about change and outsiders.

The Nuwaubians - a predominantly black cultural organization that blends elements of Christianity, Islam, Judaism and ancient Egyptian religion - are discovering the complexity of large-scale development in a new place, and are doing it behind walls patrolled by armed guards and surrounded by locals who wonder about the newcomers' intentions.

The legal battles between the Nuwaubians and the Putnam government have largely centered on the use of their land - zoning, building codes and inspections. But one thing both sides do agree on is that zoning disputes only paper over the real discord: Can these two groups of people - the newcomers and the long-time residents - accept each other enough to peacefully coexist?

Permits And Zoning

Nuwaubians lived in their village and the surrounding cities of Eatonton and Milledgeville for years before serious problems developed, and growth on the land was largely ignored.

That changed last January when occasional skirmishes over zoning and permits escalated into a lawsuit in which Putnam County officials charged Nuwaubian leaders with illegally operating a nightclub in a building zoned only for storage.

By the middle of March, a Putnam County judge halted all construction on the land in the face of charges that the group was building without permits and operating an unlicensed landfill.

On June 15, Putnam Sheriff Howard Sills acted on a court order and padlocked five buildings in

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the village, including two pyramids identified by the Nuwaubians as a church and a holy temple.

Today, the Nuwaubians still have permit applications pending with the county inspector, and little has changed. Nuwaubian spokespeople claim the county is deliberately hindering development in the village, while county officials said they are only enforcing well-established laws and ordinances.

"I have nothing against the Nuwaubians; all they have to do is abide by the law," said Putnam County Commissioner Robert Poole. "If they do what they say they're going to do, we won't have any problems."

But communication between the groups has ranged from strained to outright threatening, and it is difficult to know exactly what has been said in closed-door meetings this year.

Renee McDade and Marshall Chance, national spokespeople for the Nuwaubians, said county officials routinely reject permit applications on technicalities. When they address those concerns, McDade and Chance said, the county finds new reasons to reject them.

"We keep being put off," said Chance, Tama-Re's spiritual leader and an ordained Baptist minister who dresses in black with a traditional clergyman's collar. "They say it's lawful, we say it's obstruction."

The group's most recent applications were rejected earlier this month because the plat, a detailed map of the land, did not meet the county's standards. They have received permits for some of the monuments, including a tall obelisk and a statue, but the pyramids and other buildings are still padlocked.

"This is something that is asked of every citizen, including myself," said Sandra Adams, also a county commissioner.

Beyond the individual buildings on the Nuwaubian's property, commissioners said they

are concerned about long-term development and the impact it will have on the rest of the county.

Chance said he envisions diverse facilities including a recording studio and theme park in Tama-Re's future as it grows into a significant cultural and residential center. Estimates from different sources placed between 100 and 300 people living full time in the village, and as it expands, Chance said, surrounding cities will reap the rewards.

"We want to help the town grow and help the economy to flourish," he said, explaining that members would continue to shop, work, bank and dine in Eatonton and Milledgeville.

But county officials questioned whether unchecked growth was desirable or possible, saying the impact on infrastructure and utilities may be more than the county can carry.

"A lot of planning has to be done before there's large growth there," Poole said. "And I don't see where the county's going to benefit too much from it."

Distractions

Side issues have created fear and distrust.

Putnam officials have been distracted by a flood of newsletters and fliers that berate and sometimes threaten public figures, including offering a \$500 reward for embarrassing information about people like Sills. The documents have been printed by groups with names like Concerned Citizens of Eatonton, but county officials believe they are run by Nuwaubian members.

"They took it upon themselves to exercise their freedom of speech," said McDade, who added that the publications did not come from the official Nuwaubian organization.

"We're not going to be intimidated in any way, shape or form," Poole said. "When they put a bounty on somebody's head, that's not very Christian of them."

Nuwaubians in the News

McDade said prominent members of the Nuwaubians have also received death threats. A Putnam County minister, Robert Lee, publishes a vehemently anti-Nuwaubian newsletter condemning the group as satanic and has led marches protesting their development.

The Nuwaubians founder and retired leader, Malachai Z. York, has been a colorful and controversial distraction himself.

Before purchasing the Putnam County land in 1993 for \$975,000, York lived in Sullivan County, New York, and was known as Dwight York. He founded the Nuwaubian nation there as early as 1970, after serving three years in prison in the 1960s for resisting arrest, assault and possession of a dangerous weapon.

"He moved here to retire," Chance said.

York has become something of a recluse, rarely appearing in public and, McDade said, moving around from place to place.

His absence became its own issue this year when he did not respond to judges' requests that he appear to answer to various charges. A formal court order was later drafted, ordering him to answer contempt charges in Putnam Superior Court.

He answered that order, but his hearing was scheduled during the Nuwaubians' annual summer festival, which draws thousands of supporters to the village. They announced that more than 30,000 protestors would descend on the courthouse before York's hearing, prompting Sills to have some 200 law enforcement officers - including a helicopter and armored personnel carrier - stationed within a few blocks. When only a few hundred York supporters arrived, they accused Sills of mustering an overwhelming and threatening police force, and both sides launched into another round of defensive rhetoric and name-calling.

Accusations Of Racism

Throughout the legal disputes, the Nuwaubians have lobbed accusations of racism and religious persecution, leaving county officials angry and defensive.

"It's a group of black separatists who believe white people are genetically inferior mutants," said Dorothy Adams, an attorney for Putnam County. "They try to make us look like a bunch of big-bellied rednecks."

McDade called those claims ridiculous, saying that although the group is predominantly black, it includes members who are white, Asian and of other descent.

"We don't see this as a black-white issue," McDade said. "It's a matter of religious persecution."

But despite what is said in interviews, commissioner Sandra Adams said the Nuwaubians have repeatedly made race an issue. Adams, who is black, said she has been called a "house nigger" by Nuwaubian protesters.

"They do not want to solve these problems; they want to call attention to themselves," said Sandra Adams, who is not related to the county's attorney. "When the racism card is played, everybody stops what they're doing and converges on little old Putnam County."

National publications from Time magazine to the New York Times have covered the Nuwaubian issue this summer.

And while she believes racism still exists throughout the United States, Sandra Adams said it is not an issue in the Putnam community.

The four voting members of the Putnam commission are evenly split - Poole and Steve Layson are white, Sandra Adams and Jimmy Davis are black. Chairman Ralph Perdomo is white, but votes only to break ties.

"It is not my concern who they pray to or what color they are, just that they are citizens of Putnam County," Perdomo said. "I will bend

Nuwaubians in the News

over backwards to assist any citizen, but I won't break the law."

But the commissioners are aware of just how different the Nuwaubians are from traditional Putnam residents.

"There are going to continue to be ripples all along the way because they are a cult," Poole said.

"I don't care what they say, that's not the norm in a society, and we're a small town."

Chance said it is difficult to continue to believe that county officials are supportive in the face of the legal stalemate they have reached. In the case of the alleged nightclub, which the Nuwaubians call the Ramses Social Club, Chance said the group spent months trying to have the building rezoned, but were never given clear directions from the county.

"They gave us a list of 19 violations of the club," Chance said, "then padlocked it before we could fix them."

Keeping The Peace

Sills sees himself as the man in the middle, charged with keeping things cool.

"I have been willfully obstructed and opposed by armed individuals, and I have simply turned around and left, even with court orders," Sills said. "It is my professional opinion that they are desperately seeking a confrontation."

Sills said he has overridden department policies, forgone arrests and not responded to threats and behavior that would land other citizens in jail, all in the interest of preventing a showdown. He said he has ordered his deputies not to stop Nuwaubian drivers for minor violations such as license plate problems, or for speeding at less than 75 mph.

"There are lots of things I could arrest them for that I have not," Sills said. "I accept responsibility for not doing that, but police

discretion is something I have. I don't want an armed confrontation ever."

But Sills is losing patience with the group that, despite his pains, has called him a "demon" and, he said, threatened him. Sills takes the threats so seriously that he no longer lets his children stay in his home overnight. "I've done it under an onslaught, never seen in this state, of propaganda slandering me, and I've never raised my voice," Sills said.

Sills has however appeared in a New York television news report about the Nuwabians and has compared the group to other well-known cult organizations. Sills said the group - which he calls "the so-called Nuwaubians" - presents no real threat to members of the public, outside of law enforcement.

Political Threat?

Government officials, however, do perceive a potential political threat from the Nuwaubians as their numbers continue to grow in the region. In a taped speech, York said the group would establish an independent nation with passports, taxes and laws on the Putnam County land. Members already carry those passports, which grant them access to the land.

"I have a problem with them wanting to take over," said commissioner Sandra Adams. "If they're not going to follow the established laws, do I have to follow the laws they put in place? Does that leave me at their mercy or do I have to pack up my little bongos and boogie out of town?" The Nuwaubians, whose published literature extols American government and demands loyalty to the country, deny any desire to establish a sovereign nation and said York's comments were taken out of context. Chance said York was speaking of creating a theme park similar to Disney parks in Florida or California.

"We did not come as a political threat," Chance said. "We have had the FBI and GBI here. If we were lawbreakers, we would not ask for help from the federal government."

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One of their cornerstone publications, "Little Guide Book for Nuwaubians," reprints the entire U.S. Constitution. The same book, which includes rules for Nuwaubians, forbids disorderly conduct and demands total cooperation with police.

Perdomo dismissed concerns of a political threat. Tama-Re is in the same voting district as Lake Sinclair, which Perdomo said is the fastest-growing district in the county and therefore unlikely to feel much political impact from the Nuwaubians.

But they have already made their presence felt in local political groups. Some 125 of the 550 members of the Putman County NAACP are Nuwaubians, giving them a voice in the group.

"If they do take over," Poole said, "a lot of people will move out."

Endgame

The heart of the problem, according to Poole and Perdomo, is that the Nuwaubians lack the technical expertise to build and win approval for their developments.

Progress has been smoother when the Nuwaubians have enlisted the help of expert contractors and engineers, but commissioners said those experts have not been used on a consistent enough basis to solve the disagreements. The Nuwaubians are still petitioning for permits that would legitimate the padlocked buildings and clear the way for future building. But McDade is concerned that there may not be an end in sight.

"What is the next reason for saying 'no' to the Nuwaubians?" she asked. Whenever it does come, Perdomo said there is only one possible outcome. "It's going to end with them obeying our laws," he said. "That's the only way it can end."

Reaction to Nuwaubians mixed in Putnam County

Macon Telegraph, August 8, 1999
By Rob Peecher

EATONTON - Wooten's Barber Shop encompasses all that a small town is. Trophies from Sammy Wooten's hunting expeditions hang on the walls. Wooten has also hung documentation certifying his ability to tell tall tales, and it's the same place where many of the men who come here got their hair cut when they were boys.

On Thursday Hillary Clinton's possible bid for a New York Senate seat was the topic of discussion as Wooten trimmed a man's hair and others waited their turn. In addition to national politics, hunting and local rumors, the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors has been a topic of conversation in the barber shop since the fraternal organization moved to Putnam County six years ago.

"That's all they talk about," Wooten said. "You tell me any town that wouldn't. That's been the biggest concern in the last year, the Nuwaubian situation."

Some Fear Group

Wooten said his customers once joked about the Nuwaubians, a group that claims in at least some of its literature that its leader, Malachi York, is from another planet and a space ship will be coming to take York and his followers away.

But over the course of the last year, the jokes have died down. Some locals are concerned, others are afraid, Wooten said.

Wooten cites a series of pamphlets as the cause of Putnam County's concerns. Those pamphlets have been handed out around town by members

of the fraternal organization for more than a year. Two groups take credit for producing most of the pamphlets, the People Against Violence in Eatonton and the Concerned Citizens of Eatonton. In the literature, the groups claim to be made up of Nuwaubian members and others, though most in Putnam County believe the pamphlets come straight from the Nuwaubians.

The pamphlets have attacked numerous public officials. J.D. "Dizzy" Adams, Putnam County's building inspector, and his children have been targeted; at least one pamphlet insinuates the sheriff was responsible for a motorcycle wreck that killed a man; a tabloid-sized newspaper offered a \$500 reward for information on past criminal history of several county officials.

"To start with, it was kind of a joke. People laughed about it. But paying \$500 just to get some dirt on people, and the way they treated Dizzy's children - that was terrible. ... People are getting afraid of what's going to happen," Wooten said.

Going Public

Many Putnam Countians don't want to talk publicly about the Nuwaubians, and some that do aren't comfortable providing their names. One woman, who wished to be identified only by her first name, Dixie, said the Nuwaubians have brought disruption to the county.

"This was a hometown community. It was a small town, and to me it was a very peaceful town. They have disrupted that," Dixie said.

Some Nuwaubian women have come into Dixie's downtown shop in the past, and she said she's never had any problems with them. But she believes the group is refusing to obey the county's laws, and she believes the national spotlight that has been cast on Putnam County and the Nuwaubians has portrayed an unfair view of the county.

"It's making our county look like it's a bad place to come, and that's the furthest from the truth. They're the ones who moved into our

community, and they should have to obey our laws," Dixie said.

Pleasant Customers

Ray Saltamacchio, who owns the photography studio Moments to Remember in downtown Eatonton, said he shares some of the concerns with the rest of the community, but Nuwaubians often come to him for their Nuwaubian-passport photos and have always been pleasant customers.

"They've always been nice, never given me any problem whatsoever," Saltamacchio said. "As long as they don't come into town causing problems, I don't have any problem with them."

Others in the community, like Vanessa Bishop, believe the Nuwaubians have already caused problems.

"I think that they are arrogant know-alls who are out for self gain. Everything for them is race, and everything against them is race," Bishop said. "I'm sure not all of them are like that. I'm sure there are some good folks within that realm, but some are not."

At The Courthouse

Putnam County's Clerk of Superior Court, Sheila Layson, said employees at the courthouse are sometimes afraid to come to work, and when one of the pamphlets targeted a deputy clerk of court, claiming she had "sold her soul to the devil," employees at the courthouse took it personally.

Layson said that pamphlet was hand-delivered to the deputy clerk. Like Dixie, Bishop believes the press has treated the county unfairly.

"People on the outside are only going by what the Nuwaubians are saying and not talking to the people who live here. I don't believe Putnam County has been given a fair shake," she said. "If you don't like the way things are, you don't come in and try to change them. You leave."

Intent To Change

Other Putnam Countians expressed similar sentiment. They complain that the Nuwaubians are not like many emigrants who move to a place because they like the place. The Nuwaubians, people say, have moved to Putnam County with the intention of changing the place.

"Malachi said himself on TV that 'We're going to change the color of politics in Putnam County,'" Wooten said. "I don't know what it's going to come to."

Georgia Sect Alarms Neighbors

Associated Press, July 27, 1999
By Patricia J. Mays

EATONTON, Ga. (AP) - A sect founded by an ex-convict has built two 40-foot pyramids and a giant sphinx amid the pines and red clay of middle Georgia, alarming some with its armed guards and prophecies of deliverance by spaceships from another galaxy.

The sheriff and the sect had an armed confrontation in April when he tried to escort a building inspector onto the property, and tensions are running so high that mediators from the U.S. Justice Department were called in earlier this summer.

The members call themselves the Yamassee Native American Nuwaubians and claim to have created a utopian society on their 476-acre compound of Egyptian-style architecture.

Many people in and around Eatonton - a rural community that was the birthplace of Alice Walker, author of "The Color Purple," and Joel Chandler Harris, creator of the Uncle Remus tales - fear the Nuwaubians are similar to Heaven's Gate, the cult whose 39 members committed mass suicide in 1997 in Rancho

Nuwaubians in the News

Santa Fe, Calif., and the People's Temple followers of Jim Jones.

"This group here has a combination of all those schools of thought," Sheriff Howard Sills said.

About 100 Nuwaubians live in trailers on the compound. An additional 300 to 400 reside elsewhere in Putnam County. The Nuwaubians, most of whom are black, claim to be descended from the Egyptians and the Yamassees, a tribe of Indians indigenous to this part of Georgia.

Past the armed guards at the compound's entryway, Nile River Road stretches between two rows of statues of Egyptian royalty. A gold pyramid serves as a mini-mall, with a bookstore and clothing store. A labyrinth leads to the black pyramid, which serves as a church. Inside, an Egyptian-like chant hums over speakers 24 hours a day.

The group's lodge houses busts of King Tut and Queen Nefertiti and a glass tomb holding an alien-like creature with a huge head and bulging eyes.

Members say they pay no dues and are free to come and go. And they insist that suicide is not in their plans.

The group's founder, Dwight York, who calls himself Malachi Z. York, served time in New York in the 1960s for assault, resisting arrest and possession of a dangerous weapon.

York has claimed to be from a galaxy called Illyuwn and has said that in 2003 spaceships are going to descend from the sky and pick up a chosen 144,000 people for a rebirth. Most recently, York has referred to himself as Chief Black Eagle, a reincarnated leader of the Yamasse Indian.

"It's a constantly opportunistic evolving ideology," the sheriff said. "We've gone from an extraterrestrial to a Christian pastor to an Indian leader with willful and wanton resistance to legal authority time and time again."

The group's spokeswoman, Renee McDade, and Marshall Chance, who is referred to as the Nuwaubians' leader, distance themselves from the space prophecies of York, who lives on the compound and refuses to give interviews.

"We're all awaiting the coming of the real Messiah," Chance said. "We are a biblical people. If it's not in the Bible, then we're not concerned about it."

The group moved to Georgia in 1993 from New York, where it had operated under other names, including the Ansaru Allah Community. A 1993 FBI report linked that group to a myriad of crimes, including arson and extortion.

Until recently, the Nuwaubians pretty much kept to themselves. Then last year, the county rejected a request to have the property rezoned from agricultural to commercial. Since then, the Nuwaubians have been at odds with county officials.

Shortly after the building inspector was denied access, the sheriff and his deputies tried to enter.

"The armed guards literally stood in front of my car," Sills said. "It was obvious to me that this was provocative and they wanted to provoke some sort of armed confrontation, so I decided to leave."

When the sheriff returned two months later, "we were served with this cockamamie lawsuit that said we'd be fined \$5 million if we went onto the property," Sills said.

The Nuwaubians said they have met all the permit requirements. "We feel they're trying to impede us from our progress here. It feels like they're trying to put us out of our land," Chance said.

Mediators from the Justice Department's Community Dispute Resolution unit were asked to get involved after the Nuwaubians leveled charges of racism against officials in Putnam County, which has about 17,000 people, more than one-third of them black.

"The Nuwaubians felt they were being harassed, the county officials said they were being harassed," mediator Ernie Stallworth said. "Everyone was pointing a finger and that has lessened, but I still believe we have work to do."

Religious sect plans gala event

Nuwaubians' leader will hold private New Year's celebration in Athens' downtown Classic Center

Morris News Service/December 31, 1999

By Jim Thompson

Athens, Ga. -- More than 1,000 members of a quasi-religious sect led by a man who has claimed to be from another galaxy -- and has said ships will descend from the sky in 2003 to claim a selected 144,000 people for "rebirth" -- are expected to be at the Classic Center in downtown Athens today for a private New Year's Eve observance.

The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, which has operated compound in the Putnam County town of Eatonton since 1993 that has housed as many as 400 people at one time, has reserved part of the Classic Center for a \$100-per-ticket event that Classic Center officials are describing as a private social affair.

Citing the private nature of the event, the only information Classic Center officials would provide Wednesday were the number of people expected and the fact that the event would not involve food service.

The Nuwaubians' leader, known as Malachi York and, more recently, as Chief Black Eagle -- the deed for the group's 476-acre Putnam

County compound identifies him as Dwight York -- has been living in Athens since sometime last year, according to law enforcement officials and other sources. Mr. York is not listed in the Athens telephone book.

The group also operates at least two bookstores in Athens under the name Holy Tabernacle Ministries. One of the bookstores is located at 1072 Baxter St. The second is located on Gaines School Road near Lexington Road. The Nuwaubians also had a float in this year's Black Men of Athens parade. The identity and beliefs of the group have shifted periodically since Mr. York emerged in New York in 1970, in his late 20s.

One of the group's more recent names has been the Yamassee Native American Nuwaubians.

In the early days in New York, Mr. York's followers were known as Ansaar Pure Sufi, the Nubian Islaamic Hebrews, the Ansaaru Allah Community and the Ancient and Mystic Order of Malchizedek.

Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills, who has closely tracked the group's activities since its arrival in his county six years ago, said he does not believe the New Year's Eve event at the Classic Center will involve any type of millennial ritual.

"I would not anticipate any sort of problem," Sheriff Sills said. "It certainly would be counterproductive to him (York)."

Sheriff Sills believes that the event will be something of an homage to Mr. York from the sect's true believers.

"I imagine this is going to be his gala event," Sheriff Sills said. According to Athens-Clarke Mayor Doc Eldridge, the Nuwaubians have held similar events at the Cobb Galleria in metropolitan Atlanta, and representatives of that venue reported no problems with the group. While Sheriff Sills estimates that only a few hundred Nuwaubians have occupied the Eatonton compound at any one time, he

estimates that Nuwaubian adherents in north Georgia could number "in the thousands."

>From a law enforcement standpoint, the Nuwaubians have not been an inordinate problem in Putnam County, according to Sheriff Sills, although a number of Nuwaubians have been arrested for possession of "bootleg audio and video tapes."

Nuwaubian land sale sparks little controversy

Macon Telegraph, February 4, 2000
By Rob Peecher

(EATONTON - The talk of the town here Thursday wasn't really the talk of the town at all.

In fact, most people didn't care one way or another that the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors has put a hand-painted sign on the front gate of its 476-acre village offering "Land for sale."

"If they stay, it's fine," said Kimberly Lee, a waitress at Rusty's Restaurant in downtown Eatonton. "If they leave, it's fine." Lee said no one was talking about it at lunch Thursday.

But at least some people are taking notice of the sign. Al Woodall, an agent representing the nine individuals who own the property, said Thursday he has received a number of calls. Woodall's number is the one painted on the "for sale" sign erected Tuesday afternoon.

"I'm getting about 30 (calls) a day," Woodall said. Some of the calls are people interested in buying the property hailed as "Egypt of the West." Others are just calling to see what's going on, he said.

Woodall said the property's nine owners are not ready to make any public comment about their decision to put the land on the market. And he said a price for the property has not been disclosed.

Malachi York, the founder of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, bought the property for \$975,000 in 1993. The village has become home to about 150 members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, and hundreds of other Nuwaubians live in the surrounding communities of Eatonton and Milledgeville.

Several acres of the property, which front Shady Dale Highway, are adorned with Egyptian-style statues, two pyramids, a sphinx and other structures, many with Egyptian-style facades.

Ralph Perdomo, chairman of the Putnam County Commission, said he had heard the property was for sale but questions the sincerity. "We'll see if that's legitimate," he said. "I also heard that if 100 citizens can come up with \$10,000, we're all going to buy it." Perdomo said he doesn't know why the Nuwaubians would consider selling the property.

"They haven't taken me into their confidence," Perdomo said. At Wooten's Barber Shop, some folks have been talking about the sign, owner Sammy Wooten said.

But "most people just laugh," Wooten said.

Wooten and his customers also wonder at the offer of land for sale. "Who's going to buy it? Who would want that? I think it's just for show," he said.

The Nuwaubians aren't saying much about the land going on the market. Woodall declined to say how much the property owners want for the property. Renee McDade, a spokeswoman for the Nuwaubians, refused to say if the group is planning to move from Putnam County.

After buying the land in 1993, York deeded it to a trust in February 1999. Woodall, acting as

manager of the trust, deeded the land in June to the nine individuals now listed as property owners.

Since 1998, the Nuwaubians and county officials have been engaged in a series of legal battles about what the county claims are numerous violations of the county's zoning and building codes.

Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills has issued citations to various Nuwaubians alleging zoning violations. In literature distributed by members of the group, Sills has been the target of accusations and criticism.

Thursday, the sheriff had little to say about the land going up for sale but said he has been "inundated" with calls from people curious about the sale. And if the price is right, the sheriff said he'd be an interested buyer. "I wish I had enough money to buy it," Sills said, "because I certainly would, because it would be worth it to me."

Snipes' company may buy property

Actor's Amen-Ra films is interested in Putnam land adjacent to Nuwaubians

**The Macon Telegraph, May 11, 2000
By Rob Peecher**

EATONTON - A security guard group affiliated with action-adventure actor Wesley Snipes is interested in buying land in Putnam County to build a training facility.

The 257 acres adjoins the 476-acre village owned by the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors on Shady Dale Road west of Eatonton.

Snipes' production company, Amen-Ra films, owns The Royal Guard of Amen-Ra, the company planning to purchase the acreage, according to Snipes spokeswoman Justine Hah.

Hah, however, denies any connection between Snipes and the Nuwaubians.

But a Nuwaubian representative said Thursday that Snipes is one of many "millionaire Nuwaubians" planning to purchase property in Putnam County.

Al Woodall, an agent for the nine Nuwaubians who own the 476-acre village, said millionaire Nuwaubians are not only buying the 257 acres at 290 Shady Dale Road but also the village at 404 Shady Dale Road.

"(Snipes) is actually an avid Nuwaubian, at that," Woodall said. "What I'm hearing is there are a few Nuwaubian millionaires from the music industry, the movie industry, business, finance, different aspects - but they're all millionaires, including (Nuwaubian leader) Malachi York. And from what I'm hearing, (they) are planning on buying the property in Putnam County, including the 404 Shady Dale Road."

But Hah said Thursday she had never heard of the Nuwaubians.

"I don't even know how you spell that," she said. "Wesley is not affiliated with that group on any level, even remotely."

Hah also said it is "pure coincidence" that The Royal Guard of Amen-Ra, which bills itself on the Internet as "an international, multi-level security and protection company," is looking at a piece of property that adjoins the Nuwaubian village.

Hah refused to provide details about The Royal Guard of Amen-Ra, but she did confirm the group intends to build a training facility for private security guards.

Nuwaubians in the News

The Royal Guard of Amen-Ra's posting on the Internet site "cooljobs.com" seeks 200 people for "an elite team of highly trained men and women who will provide the following services: International and domestic risk management; intelligence and protective operations; V.I.P./executive protection to dignitaries and celebrities; special event security; counter-surveillance and counter terrorist measures."

A representative of The Royal Guard of Amen-Ra used the 257-acre property's address - 290 Shady Dale Road - in December to file an application for a permit with the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms for the "purchase, movement, travel and storage of various weapons and ammunition nationwide to provide security, security guard and firearms training services."

Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills said Wesley Rudy Snipes, who identified himself as Wesley Snipes' brother and a representative of The Royal Guard, came to his office in early November to talk to him about the group's plans for the property.

Rudy Snipes is listed as the CEO of The Royal Guard on its incorporation papers with the Georgia Secretary of State's office. He compared the proposed training center to the state Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth, Sills said.

"I had heard rumors about it, but I hadn't heard anything lately until yesterday, when I got a call from an inspector with the BATF," Sills said Tuesday. "He was following up on the application for a federal firearms dealer license that The Royal Guard of Amen-Ra, Inc., had applied for back in December."

Rudy Snipes signed the BATF application. The permit is pending, according to Sills.

In a letter Tuesday responding to the BATF investigator, Sills noted inaccuracies on The Royal Guard application:

Snipes certified that he had provided Sills with a copy of the BATF application, which Sills said he had not.

Snipes stated that the property identified as 290 Shady Dale Road is owned by The Royal Guard of Amen-Ra, but deeds indicate that S.M. Bishop Co., Inc., owns the property.

Snipes stated that The Royal Guard has obtained a business license to operate in Putnam County, but the county has not granted the company a license, according to Sills.

Snipes stated that the business has complied with state and local laws, but does not take into account that the property is zoned for agricultural purposes and "a for-profit security company and firearms dealer is certainly not an agricultural business," according to Sills. The property will have to be rezoned for commercial activity.

Atlanta developer Stan Bishop, who owns the 257 acres, said The Royal Guard approached him last year about possibly purchasing his property, but no deal has been struck.

Bishop has owned the acreage about two years. The Putnam County Tax Assessor's office values the property at \$446,963. Bishop's parents live in one of two houses on the property, and Bishop hunts and fishes there.

Bishop discounted any link between The Royal Guard and the Nuwaubians and said he believes it's the Nuwaubians who are claiming a connection with Snipes.

"(The Royal Guard) approached a real estate agent that I know. They had no idea where this piece of property was," Bishop said. "We took them and showed them the property ... and they liked it. I think all this connection between them is a bunch of trumped up crap."

The Nuwaubians, a group of followers of Malachi York, moved to Putnam County in 1993. About 150 Nuwaubians live in the village and hundreds more live in surrounding

communities of Athens, Eatonton, Sparta and Milledgeville.

The group has built pyramids and other Egyptian-type structures on a portion of the 476 acres. About 30 acres is zoned residential. The remainder is zoned for agriculture.

But about three years ago, the group began to have problems with county officials about zoning violations. For more than a year, the Nuwaubians and the County Commission have been involved in ongoing court battles about county zoning and building code violations.

The ongoing legal struggle with the county has prompted Snipes, Stevie Wonder and York to begin buying property in Putnam County, according to Woodall.

"These millionaires, Nuwaubian millionaires, are actually tired of what they've been reading, seeing and hearing about the ongoing battle in Putnam County with the officials," Woodall said. " ... So they're coming in with money, ready to go to court with the best lawyers, or whatever it takes to bring about justice," Woodall said.

Nuwaubians, Who Are These People?

'We're comfortable for and with everybody'

**The Macon Telegraph, May 15, 2000
By Matthew I. Pinzur**

Inside the fraternity gathering hall in the Nuwaubian village of Tama-Re, the walls are inlaid with intricate stone carvings, illuminated with the light of ornate lanterns dangling from the gold-painted ceiling.

Outside the hall is a Sno Cone stand and a kiddie train that takes children on rides through the village.

Contrasts such as these are typical of the developed portion of the 473-acre plot on Shady Dale Road, where monuments and pyramids painted in many colors, form the basis of a complex spiritual and cultural system.

The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors actually encompasses a number of overlapping groups, according to Marshall Chance, a Baptist minister who is the group's spiritual leader and national spokesman.

Groups include the Holy Tabernacle Ministry, which Chance describes as a non-sectarian church, and the Ancient Mystic Order of Melchizedek, a fraternal organization.

Chance calls the Nuwaubian movement a "cultural renaissance," where people from various backgrounds are invited to bring their beliefs into an amalgam of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, ancient Egyptian religions and unique Nuwaubian ideas.

They trace their roots to Egypt and claim their descendants settled in the area now known as Putnam County before the continents drifted apart. They believe they are among the first people to live in America, and also call themselves the Yamassee Native American Moors of the Creek Nation.

"We can feel and get a sense of our own cultures here," Chance said. "We're comfortable for and with everybody."

Belief System

Chance and other Nuwaubians bristle at being called a cult, explaining that they encourage and relish the diversity of beliefs in their group rather than forcing members to conform to a single set of ideas. Members are free to come and go as they please, he said.

Nuwaubians in the News

"We are very particular about giving people their space and letting them be what they want to be," said Renee McDade, also a Nuwaubian spokeswoman.

The Nuwaubians publish a variety of books and pamphlets about their lifestyle and beliefs, including a 1,700-page sacred text called The Holy Tablets.

Chance said the belief system is built around the idea that all major religions come from the same basic stories and characters and are therefore inter-related.

More attention has been given to ideas about extra-terrestrials and the belief that 144,000 people will be taken aboard a space vessel on May 5, 2003.

Some members do believe in unconventional ideas about aliens and flying saucers, but others - who spoke on the condition their names not be used - said they joined to be part of the cultural exchange and tight community, and expect to live on the land well beyond 2003.

'Father, Mentor, Counselor, Guide'

Chance said those aspects of the religion have been misrepresented. They do embrace a belief that their ancestry is from beyond Earth, but Chance said the details of those beliefs have been confused by erroneous information presented on the unregulated plains of the Internet.

A Time magazine article, for example, quoted a Web site in which the Nuwaubian leader Malachai Z. York claimed to be "the Supreme Being of This Day and Time, God in the Flesh."

But York, Chance said, does not have a Web site and that information did not come from the official Nuwaubian organization.

"He's like a father, mentor, counselor and guide," Chance said of York, under whom the minister studied. "He was born here and has

parents here, though he may trace his culture to the stars."

York rarely appears in public, McDade said, moving around from place to place. He answered a court order to appear in Putnam Superior Court on contempt charges earlier this summer and also celebrated in Tama-Re during a festival last month.

"He's very down to earth and very much like a father," McDade said. "I don't see him as any different from any other person."

York's Past

Before purchasing the Putnam County land in 1993, according to tax records for \$975,000, York lived in Sullivan County, New York, and was known as Dwight York. He founded the Nuwaubian nation there as early as 1970, after serving three years in prison in the 1960s for resisting arrest, assault and possession of a dangerous weapon.

"He moved here to retire," Chance said.

York, according to Chance, earned most of the sum as a music producer, saying he produced such hits as Billy Paul's "Me and Mrs. Jones," Teddy Pendergrass' "Close the Door" and The Delfonics "La La Means I Love You."

York is not listed as the producer in the credits of any of those songs.

York transferred the deed in February to Tama-Re Enterprises at no charge. It was transferred again on June 19 to a group of nine people: Nathaniel Washington, Yvonne Powell, Vincent Powell, Ethel Richardson, Anthony Evans, Donald McIntyre, Patrice Evans, Althea Shine and Michelle Mitchell.

Just as the Nuwaubians were moving to Georgia from their original home in New York in 1993, the FBI released a report that linked the group to welfare fraud and extortion. But there is no indication that any arrests were made as a result of the report.

Nuwaubians in the News

'America's A Great Country'

Chance said the Putnam County group is dedicated to obeying and celebrating American laws and life.

"We're looking at the greatest country, the greatest land, the greatest place," Chance said. "America's a great country."

In taped speeches, York has said the group will form a nation on the land, passing laws, issuing passports and levying taxes.

Chance said there are no such plans, and the group looks forward to developing a theme park, recording studio, more housing and other facilities on the land. Those efforts have been stymied by a conflict with county authorities over permits and zoning.

Chance declined to speculate about how many members the Nuwaubian groups have, or about how many live in Tama-Re. McDade said the land is open daily to visitors and members host classes about Nuwaubian beliefs Sundays at 4 p.m.

"It's an opportunity to experience us," McDade said. "No one feels any obligations."

Gaining Access

The Macon Telegraph obtained copies of the applications to both the Holy Tabernacle Ministries and the Ancient Mystic Order of Melchizedek. Both ask for an assortment of biographical information.

The application to the Mystic Order requires a \$25 membership fee and includes a pledge of silence, forbidding the applicant from discussing or divulging documents from the order. Those requirements aren't much different from Masonic organizations.

The church application includes a comprehensive medical history and requires proof of a completed HIV test and copies of birth certificates and Social Security cards.

Some members move to the land, Chance said, and others only pass through for a short time. Artists and tradesmen have spent weeks in Tama-Re simply to add their talents to the monuments and buildings, and others join but continue to live in nearby towns of Eatonton and Milledgeville.

Once accepted, members are given Tama-Re passports and license plates, which grant them access to the land and passage through the armed security guards at the gate.

'Something Better'

On weekends, Tama-Re is often bustling with members and visitors. Some dress in simple black or white robes as they seek spiritual enlightenment while reading sacred texts and walking through a stone labyrinth that encircles the black pyramid, their holy temple. Others are dressed in weekend clothing - shorts or jeans, T-shirts and sportcoats - as they sit around the elaborate fountains and chat. Salsa music blasts from a speaker affixed to a stories-high obelisk near the church while blues croon from an area near the Sphinx, and chants drone from another speaker near the labyrinth.

"We're building a place that's something better," Chance said. "People have encountered miracles here."

Children play on a trampoline just yards away from a recreation of King Solomon's Temple, which serves as the group's library.

"These are tribalistic lands," Chance said. "It's home for us."

Judge denies contempt motion in Putnam/Nuwaubian wrangle

The Macon Telegraph, June 8, 2000
By Rob Peecher

EATONTON - A judge denied a motion Wednesday to find an attorney representing Putnam County in contempt of court. The judge then ordered the man who brought the contempt motion to pay attorney's fees for the time spent on the hearing.

Wednesday's hearing underscored the contentious atmosphere that continues to exist between county officials and the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

Al Woodall, an agent for the nine property owners of the Nuwaubian village west of Eatonton, filed the motion for contempt after Frank Ford, an attorney for the county, refused to be deposed at a local Chinese restaurant. Depositions taken in Putnam County are normally done in the County Courthouse grand jury room. According to Ford, the grand jury room was available at the scheduled time of his deposition.

Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge Hugh V. Wingfield III ordered Woodall to pay \$200 in attorney's fees to Ford for the time he spent working on his response to the contempt-of-court motion.

"In 20 years (practicing law), I have never heard of a deposition being taken in a restaurant, particularly in a Chinese restaurant during lunch hour," Wingfield said, adding that he'd also never heard of opposing counsel being deposed. "In a bizarre case, this is the most bizarre thing I've heard."

Wingfield told Woodall the contempt motion was "utter nonsense." "Not only is Mr. Ford not in contempt, this is a complete waste of my time," Wingfield said.

Wingfield urged Woodall to hire an attorney, and then said he would take the "extraordinary" action of ordering all discovery by both sides suspended until an appeal in the case is concluded. Wingfield also said he would place restrictions on depositions once he allows them to resume.

"This is a zoning matter, and it should be over," Wingfield said. Ford testified Wednesday that he refused to be deposed at the Happy China restaurant because of the conditions and a crowd that had gathered at the restaurant when he showed up the morning of the deposition. The room where Woodall had set up for the deposition was not sealed from the rest of the restaurant, there was no air conditioning and the room was "stifling," and there was noise coming from the kitchen, Ford said.

"In fact, what (Woodall) had done was invited his buddies to come and watch him take my deposition," Ford said on the stand.

There were 50 to 60 Nuwaubians in and out of the restaurant when he showed up for his deposition, Ford said.

In recent months, Ford has twice been before Wingfield with motions of contempt of court filed against him. In April, Woodall attempted to have an arrest warrant issued for Ford. Both contempt motions have been denied.

After a hearing in April, Magistrate Judge Ellen Rudder Pierce refused to issue the arrest warrant. The latest legal wrangling stems from a zoning lawsuit.

Last June, under court order, the county padlocked several buildings - built without building permits - on Nuwaubian property. Most, if not all, of those padlocks have been removed by the county, and the Nuwaubians are working to bring those buildings into

compliance with county building ordinances, according to county building inspector J.D. "Dizzy" Adams.

The Nuwaubians have filed suit seeking to force the county to let them open the Rameses social club. Nuwaubians say they want to use the club as a hunting lodge. County officials contend it was built under a building permit for a storage shed but used as a nightclub. That building was padlocked under a separate court order.

The only issue that remains unresolved in the suit brought by the county a year and a half ago is whether or not the county can seek monetary damages from the Nuwaubians, according to Ford.

Nuwaubians may try to have elections halted

Group's attorney planning appeal to get members back on voter rolls

**The Macon Telegraph, June 23, 2000
By Rob Peecher**

EATONTON - An attorney representing members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors may go to court to try to stop Putnam County elections until his clients are returned to the county's voter rolls.

The Putnam County Board of Registrars voted during a hearing Wednesday to remove another 13 individuals from county voter rolls; 23 people were removed during a similar hearing last week. Most, if not all, of the 36 are affiliated with the Nuwaubian group.

Merrick Bernstein, an Atlanta attorney representing at least some of the Nuwaubians,

said he will appeal the board's rulings on behalf of his clients who were purged from the voter list.

"We will request (the appeals) be considered in an expedited manner," Bernstein said.

If the appeals are not considered by a Superior Court judge quickly, and his clients are unable to vote in the July 18 primary because their appeals have not been heard, Bernstein said he will ask the court to keep the county from holding any elections.

"We will seek to enjoin all elections in Putnam County until these issues are settled," Bernstein said. "Obviously we're very disappointed in the results of the hearing. A number of valid electors of Putnam County got disqualified and lost their critical and essential right to vote." Bernstein said the hearing was "improperly designed" to remove Nuwaubians from the county's voter list.

Of the 93 cases that were supposed to be heard during the nearly five-hour hearing Wednesday evening, 13 individuals were purged from voter rolls, eight were kept on and 72 cases were continued to a later date. Most of the cases before the board Wednesday had been continued from last week's hearing.

In most cases, those who were purged Wednesday presented testimony and some documented evidence that they reside in Putnam County. However, at least some presented only a Georgia driver's licenses or Georgia identification cards obtained after last week's hearing. In other cases, the board found testimony or evidence lacking, said board member Trenton Brown III, who conducted both hearings.

"It is the burden of the one being challenged to offer evidence to show the question that led to the challenge was unwarranted," Brown said. It was up to the board members' discretion as to whether a person's testimony and evidence were sufficient to prove the person lived at the address claimed on voter registration cards, Brown said. "I didn't give a Georgia driver's license made the day of last week's hearing much weight," he said.

For the most part, the challenges were based on the number of individuals living at one address. At 173 Shady Dale Road, for instance, there were 35 people registered to vote at that address, where there are three singlewide trailers and a house.

Brown said Bernstein was telling witnesses what to say while they were being questioned by the board, and when questions arose about other people living in the same household, witnesses sometimes read their names from a list.

"Everything was so questionable last night," Brown said. "It was blatant that they were being fed answers from their attorney or reading straight from the list. ... But that wasn't a controlling factor. I can't say it wasn't odd, them having to think about who was living with them and maybe coming up with a first name. ... The challenge shows that you've questioned what they put on the (voter registration card); verbal testimony's not going to do it."

Bernstein denied that he was telling his clients what to say when they were being questioned by the board, and he said the new driver's licenses and identification cards were obtained on his advice. "The list they were reading from was a list we prepared to refresh their minds," Bernstein said, adding that many of his clients had never been in a court setting before and were nervous.

Brown said if individuals could provide bills, letters from family and friends, tax returns or other dated information showing their address, that was the evidence he gave the most weight to.

Bernstein echoed the opinion of his clients that the county is merely attempting to remove those associated with the Nuwaubian group from the voter rolls before the July 18 primary.

"All of the people who showed up at the hearing are valid residents of Putnam County," Bernstein said. "That's our belief and our understanding. What's funny is that the notice of hearing was mailed to the address (being questioned), and they got the notice of hearing."

Though he admitted that at some of the addresses being questioned there are an unusual number of adults living in small houses, Bernstein said that is the way his clients have chosen to live.

"Some of us live different lifestyles than others," Bernstein said.

Purge of Nuwaubians from voter rolls continues

**Group's attorney planning appeal to
get members back on voter rolls**

**The Macon Telegraph, June 23, 2000
By Rob Peecher**

EATONTON - The Putnam County Board of Registrars began disqualifying members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors from voter rolls despite testimony and evidence presented by some of those people during a hearing Wednesday. The hearing continued into the night, but at The Macon Telegraph's deadline Wednesday, six of the 91 people subpoenaed to prove their residency had been removed from the voter list.

Three of those six did not attend the hearing. The other three attended, swore an oath that their testimony would be true, and presented at least some documentation that they lived at the address they claimed on voter registration applications.

An attorney representing several of the Nuwaubians, Merrick Bernstein of Atlanta, raised questions and objected when the board voted to purge some of his clients without stating a reason.

Trenton Brown III, a board of registrars member who was conducting the hearing, threatened to have Bernstein removed from the courtroom if he continued to ask questions.

"There will be absolutely no more questions from that side of the bar," Brown said.

The board continued one man's case, because he did not bring the documents required by the subpoena he received.

Last week, the board of registrars held the first in a series of hearings to determine if people who do not live in Putnam County have been registering to vote here. At that hearing, 23 people were purged from the voter list, three were kept on the voter rolls, and another 91 cases were continued to Wednesday's hearing.

Of those 91, 45 people attended last week's hearing and refused to take an oath and testify before the board, and another 46 simply did not attend. Nearly three hours into Wednesday's hearing, the majority of those 91 cases had yet to be called. Unlike last week's meeting, those called Wednesday agreed to take the oath that the evidence they presented and the testimony they gave would be true.

Questions about the status of the 91 voters and as many as 200 more were raised after Putnam County Registrar Marianne Tanner received several voter registration cards on the same day giving addresses as 173 Shady Dale Road. Tanner knew there were several people already registered to vote at that address and began going through the voter rolls. She determined 58 people were registered to vote at one of four addresses in addition to the 35 registered to vote at 173 Shady Dale Road, where there are three trailers and a house.

Most, but not all, of the voters whose status is being challenged by the board of registrars are people affiliated with the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

At least two more hearings are expected to be held in upcoming weeks. Elections investigators

from the Secretary of State's Office have attended both hearings so far.

In the cases of the 23 purged during last week's hearing, Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills found evidence that they had registered to vote in Putnam County and had since obtained driver's licenses using out-of-county addresses. That evidence was used to purge those people from the voter rolls.

Late events from Wednesday night's hearing will be included in Friday's Telegraph.

Nuwaubians' annual festival gets under way

Group's attorney planning appeal to get members back on voter rolls

**The Macon Telegraph, June 24, 2000
By Rob Peecher**

EATONTON - The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors' annual festival began Friday, and at least a portion of the festival will involve political activities.

This is the second year in a row that the annual festival to honor Malachi York, referred to in Nuwaubian literature as the group's "supreme grand master," comes in the middle of the group's ongoing legal battle with county officials.

Last year, buildings on the 476-acre village west of Eatonton were padlocked as members held their celebrations outside in the heat and rain. This year, the festivities will be put on hold at least twice by political activities. With the continuation of hearings by the county Board of Registrars, which have resulted in 36 members of the group being purged from the voter rolls of Putnam County, the Nuwaubians are planning

activities to protest what they term discrimination and profiling.

A program for the 12-day festival promises fishing tournaments and fish fries, puppet shows and family movies, volleyball tournaments and a beach party, with no mention of political activities.

But a Nuwaubian Web site encourages members to attend the annual summer convention of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials in Savannah today. And a rally has been scheduled from 5 to 9 p.m. Tuesday on the lawn of the Putnam County Courthouse.

The Putnam County Sheriff's Office and volunteer fire department got an unexpected invitation Friday afternoon to the festival when a car fire spread in a grass field the Nuwaubians were using as a parking lot, according to Sheriff Howard Sills.

"They were parking vehicles in the grass, as high as six inches and completely dry," Sills said. "A lady pulled up, and as she was getting out of the car, they noticed smoke started coming out from under the hood. They were trying to put it out with sand, but it spread to the next car. They quickly moved some other cars out of the way, but the fire burned up eight cars completely."

The cause of the fire had not been determined Friday afternoon, but Sills said he suspects the fire started when the heat of the car's engine came into contact with the grass.

In past years, motels in Milledgeville were booked nearly full with Nuwaubians attending the annual festival. This year, motel managers in Eatonton and Milledgeville reported only a handful of Nuwaubian guests. "If they're doing it, they're not doing it with us," said Brad Holloway, sales manager of the Milledgeville Holiday Inn.

Holloway said that, last year, the hotel was nearly completely booked with people attending the "York family reunion."

At the Comfort Inn in Milledgeville, manager and owner Nick Patel said last year he had 10 to 15 rooms booked by Nuwaubians coming from England. This year, he has about half that many.

Another Milledgeville motel manager said the 51 rooms in her motel have been filled with Nuwaubians in previous years, but this year there are only 10 booked by Nuwaubians.

The program for the week's festival promises a carnival, entertainment, fireworks and a parade. There also are times set aside for prayers, teaching and ceremonies.

Brown receives support from black elected officials

Savannah Morning News , June 25, 2000

By Bret Bell

State flag, racism take center stage at the GABEO summer convention. Embattled Liberty County Tax Commissioner Carolyn Brown on Saturday received support from the state's largest organization of black politicians. About 200 people who attended a morning session of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials, meeting at Savannah State University for the organization's summer convention, included Brown's cause among seven issues that the organization agreed to support. Other issues included changing the Georgia state flag, lifting the U.S. embargo against Cuba and supporting a Putnam County sect that has two 40-foot pyramids and a giant sphinx on its property.

A judge has ordered Brown to repay Liberty County \$1.2 million in fees, commissions and legal expenses she collected from property taxes and vehicle tag payments. Two weeks ago, a judge ruled that Brown is ineligible to run for re-election. The item about Brown was tagged on at the last minute to the list of issues that the

association will support, just prior to a unanimous voice vote on all seven topics. Little information was given about the history of the Brown case or issues surrounding it.

The vote shows that "we are totally supportive of the struggles in these communities," said state Rep. Tyrone Brooks, president of the organization. "It's important for us to come together as African Americans because we have problems that are unique to us."

Brown said she was pleased that the debate was "moving outside the box of Hinesville," saying support from the outside was necessary because Liberty County officials who don't want her in office are unfairly targeting her. But the issue that took center stage Saturday was changing the Georgia state flag, which incorporates the Confederate "Stars and Bars." The Rev. Nelson Rivers, director of field operations for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, pressed the issue during the event's keynote speech, saying the flag was "symbolic of the hatred of you because of your color."

"The Confederate Flag is about white supremacy," Rivers said. "What flies above the (Statehouse) ought to be the symbol of all the people. ... We don't want a flag for some people, we want a flag for all people." Rivers said Gov. Roy Barnes, who has not taken a position on the state flag, must be stronger on the issue.

"He has to take a stance before the stance takes him," Rivers said. "It is clear that Gov. Barnes would not be governor if it were not for the African-American vote. At the minimum he should say, 'I respect you enough to remove this symbol of slavery.'" A good portion of those in attendance Saturday were from the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a black group located in Eatonton whose members claim to be descended from the Egyptians and from a tribe of American Indians indigenous to Georgia. Egyptian architecture, including pyramids, are located on the group's property in central Georgia. Group members have been in a dispute with Putnam County authorities over voter registration and zoning issues. They claim

election officials there have been unfairly challenging the residency of Nuwaubians in order to prevent them from voting in the predominantly white county. Justice Department officials have become involved because of the charges of racism. Convention attendees voted to support the Nuwaubians, Brown, the flag issue, efforts to lift the Cuban embargo, as well as efforts to combat alleged racism against officials in Treutlen County, Cuthbert, and black people in Richland.

Brooks said up to 1,000 members of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials would attend convention events over the course of the weekend. The Rev. Jesse Jackson had been invited to speak at Saturday's event, but could not because of scheduling conflicts. Savannah Mayor Floyd Adams Jr., who was scheduled to give the welcoming remarks at a Saturday luncheon honoring the founders of the organization, has been ill for the past few days and was unable to attend.

Nuwaubian expansion rejected

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, June 28, 2000

Rebecca McCarthy - Staff

Athens --- The Clarke County Board of Adjustments denied a zoning variance request Tuesday from the leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors to waive all buffer and setback requirements for a Broad Street building adjacent to a historic neighborhood.

Malachi Z. York, aka Dwight York, who moved with his followers from Brooklyn, N.Y., five years ago to an Egyptian-style community of 400 acres in Putnam County, lists an Athens address on his petition. He wanted to add a second floor that would double the square footage of the one-story brick structure, formerly

a toy and novelty story, and use it as a fraternal lodge for his group.

In Brooklyn, York's Muslim-oriented group was known as Ansaru Allah Community; in Putnam County, the group changed its name, garb and ideology, and built numerous Egyptian-style statues and pyramids outside Eatonton. In cities across the country, including Athens, stores offer classes about the group and sell Nuwaubian writings, a blend of philosophies from the Bible, ancient Egyptian polytheism and end-of-the-millennium alien visitation prophecies.

In Athens, York bought the Ideal Amusement building for \$285,000 this spring. It sits against the property line of a historic house on Dearing Street, its roof line level with the house's back yard. On its east side is Church Street, a narrow road with a steep incline leading from Dearing to Broad.

Several residents of the Dearing Street neighborhood, where homes date from the 1800s, spoke against granting the variance, saying the lodge would further add to parking, pedestrian and traffic problems. The neighborhood is one block south of Broad Street.

Dearing Street homeowner Farley Richmond, head of the drama department at the University of Georgia, said his street was in "a delicate balance" and any change could cause serious upset. UGA sociology professor Mark Cooney, a neighbor, said the Board of Adjustments would be setting a bad precedent if it granted the variances.

If the board allows a second floor to be built, said Dearing Street resident Walter O'Briant, the Nuwaubians will have to hire a helicopter to reach it because they won't have any rear access to the building.

NAACP member Thomas Oglesby said the response of the residents was racist and that the Nuwaubians have as much right to do business as anyone else. Bernard Foster, who identified himself as a contractor on the building, tried to

assuage the concerns of the residents, even as he chided them for "prejudging" the Nuwaubians. He said the lodge wouldn't have rowdy activity or disturb the people living behind it. It would, he said, simply be a place where "we could go as members of a fraternal organization and do the things we do in unity."

After the unanimous decision to deny the variance, Foster said he doesn't know whether York will use the building as a lodge without expanding it or find a different location.

In Putnam County, Nuwaubian followers staged a rally at the courthouse in Eatonton Tuesday afternoon, upset that the names of some followers were taken off voter registration rolls. A sheriff's spokesman said the rally seemed peaceful.

Nuwaubian rally draws hundreds

Macon Telegraph, June 28, 2000
By Rob Peecher

EATONTON - Between 600 and 800 members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors rallied Tuesday at the Putnam County Courthouse, protesting what the group believes is discrimination against Nuwaubians on the county level. Standing in temperatures exceeding 90 degrees, Nuwaubians chanted, "Fired up!" and "Nuwaubian!" as speakers from their group, the Rainbow/PUSH coalition, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials talked about racial discrimination and the right to vote.

"We won the voting rights battle - the county just needs to get the word," said Joe Beasley from the courthouse steps. Beasley, a regional director of Jesse Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH coalition, promised Nuwaubians he would stay

with them and help them in their fight against county officials.

Tyrone Brooks, a state representative from Atlanta and president of the GABEO, promised that the 700 GABEO members would stand behind the Nuwaubians. Brooks said GABEO members voted unanimously a year ago to support the Nuwaubians.

"They are as committed as they were a year ago, because they do not appreciate the persecution that is going on here in Putnam County," Brooks said. "We will do whatever it takes to make sure your rights are protected. We must get involved in this struggle to make sure that our brothers and sisters in Putnam County, Georgia, at Tama-Re are treated with fairness and dignity," Brooks continued. "I'm here to tell the officials of Putnam County here today: Just leave us alone."

The rally was held in the wake of two Putnam County Board of Registrars hearings, during which more than 100 Nuwaubians registered to vote in Putnam are having their residency challenged by the county. So far, 36 of them have been purged from the voter rolls, while another 72 cases have been continued to an unspecified date.

At least some of those gathered at the courthouse Tuesday were from other parts of the country in town for the Nuwaubians' annual festival, centered around the birthday of Malachi York, the group's leader. His birthday was Monday.

The 12-day festival began Friday and ends Tuesday. The rally began with members of the group marching around the courthouse once and ended with them marching around the courthouse nine times, chanting, "AMUN Ma-at," which means "hidden justice" in ancient Egyptian, according to members of the group.

Four uniformed Putnam County sheriff's deputies and the sheriff were at the courthouse for crowd control.

Another deputy was stationed on a nearby water tower to, "watch the crowd," according to

Sheriff Howard Sills.

Several Eatonton police officers and Police Chief Kent Lawrence were also on the streets around the courthouse directing traffic and watching the crowd. One man identified as a Nuwaubian was arrested following the rally when he urinated on the sidewalk, Sills said. The man was charged with public indecency.

Judge sides with Putnam on Nuwaubian permit

The Macon Telegraph/October 12, 2000

By Rob Peecher

A Superior Court judge Wednesday denied a request from the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors to allow the group to use one of its buildings as a hunting lodge.

Ralph Goldberg, the attorney representing the Nuwaubians, argued that the building was grandfathered in under current Putnam County zoning laws. But Frank Ford, representing the county, countered that the building was not legal when it was built and therefore cannot be grandfathered in.

"That building did not legally exist in June 1997 when the zoning ordinance was enacted," Ford said. "They can strip it down to what was permitted - a metal storage building. ... That's what they asked to build, that's what they were supposed to build, and the problem here has always been that's not what was built."

In denying the Nuwaubians' petition Wednesday, Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge Hugh V. Wingfield III said the Nuwaubians could use the structure for any use

permitted under the county's zoning laws on the agriculturally zoned property, but first, the group has to strip the building down to the metal structure allowed by the permit.

Following the hearing, representatives of the group submitted a building permit application to the county building and zoning office seeking to demolish at least a portion of the building. Also, the group submitted a rezoning application seeking to change the zoning of its entire 476-acre property to agricultural. Presently the bulk of the property is zoned for agricultural purposes, but a portion is zoned residential.

The building, known as the Rameses Social Club, was built early in 1997 and has been a center of controversy between the Nuwaubians and county officials since.

When construction began on the building, there was no building permit and a member of the fraternal organization was cited for not getting one.

The Nuwaubians obtained a building permit from the county for a 100-by-50-foot metal storage building with minimal lighting and no plumbing. When construction was completed, the building included plumbing. A stucco faade, a kitchen and other small rooms have been added to the building, all without permits. Wingfield's ruling means the additions and plumbing will have to be removed for the group to begin using the building again. The building has been padlocked for more than a year under court order.

In 1998, Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills filed a civil action against the Nuwaubians, seeking to have the building padlocked. He said the group was operating a nightclub out of the building in violation of state and county laws. The judge presiding over that case issued a permanent injunction barring the use of the building until it was returned to its original permitted specifications.

A year ago, the Nuwaubians asked the county to issue a building permit for the building as a

hunting lodge. The county building inspector denied that request, and his decision was upheld by the county zoning board and County Commission.

The commission's decision was appealed to Superior Court, leading to Wednesday's hearing.

Nuwaubians win appeals court decision

Macon Telegraph/November 11, 2000
By Rob Peecher

A Georgia Court of Appeals decision will prevent Putnam County from suing members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors for damages in the ongoing zoning and building permit lawsuit. The Oct. 25 decision also handed the fraternal organization one of its first victories in the group's three-year battle with county officials.

Ralph Goldberg, the attorney representing the more than 200 Nuwaubians named as defendants in the suit, said Friday the end to the lawsuit may be in sight. "We are now on the way to finishing this up," Goldberg said. "The part (of the appellate court's decision) that I care about, the court of appeals gutted the county's case - it dismissed all the damage actions." Frank Ford, the attorney representing the county, said the county will not appeal.

But Ford was not as confident that the issue has reached an end. Much of the dispute, and the resulting court proceedings, has centered around a structure permitted in 1997 as a storage building. The county contends the storage building was turned into a nightclub against

county zoning laws and in violation of the initial building permit.

"This is not going to be over until the nightclub is resolved," Ford said. "That's not a legal analysis, that's just common sense. ... (The Nuwaubians) want that nightclub, and we contend it's simply not authorized under our ordinance. It's that simple." However, the court's decision does "narrow the issues," Ford said. "All of our cases against the Nuwaubians have been for injunctive relief, and they're all left preserved," Ford said.

Ford said the county will most likely seek to have the courts order the injunctions against the Nuwaubians made permanent, forcing them to obey the county's zoning ordinances or be in contempt of court orders if they do not. The county also has civil claims against the Nuwaubians under the Georgia Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act which were not considered by the Georgia Court of Appeals.

The county contends that the Nuwaubians, as a group, have shown a pattern of violating the zoning ordinance. Under Georgia RICO, the county may attempt to get money damages against some of the Nuwaubians.

"It may be we don't even pursue that," Ford said. "We need to figure out where to go now that this decision is in. We may end up abandoning all money damages claims, but I'm not prepared to say that right now."

Goldberg said he is optimistic the RICO case against his clients will be unsuccessful if pursued. The October decision does allow the county to recover attorney's fees in some cases.

If the Nuwaubians were to apply for a planned development under the county's zoning ordinance, they would be able to end most of the lawsuits and most likely build what they want on the group's 476-acre property west of Eatonton, Ford said.

"We've suggested that several times and been rebuffed when we have," he said. "That has always been their best remedy. Always."

In the past, members of the group have said the planned development zoning application would force them to "jump through hoops" they would rather avoid.

Nuwaubian voting suit dismissed

Augusta Chronicle/April 11, 2001

Eatonton - A federal lawsuit accusing Putnam County voting officials of selectively purging members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors from county voting rolls has been dismissed.

U.S. District Judge Duross Fitzpatrick of the Middle District of Georgia signed a dismissal order last week with the agreement of the plaintiffs and the Putnam County Board of Registrars.

Attorney David Buffington, representing the Nuwaubians, said it was a pragmatic decision by his clients.

"They didn't see any practical purpose in pursuing it any further," Mr. Buffington said. He said his clients would pursue another suit if they thought their rights were violated again.

The lawsuit, which threatened to postpone Putnam County's July primary election last year, came after the Board of Registrars challenged the residency of 196 people registered to vote in Putnam County. The Nuwaubians filed suit, alleging the effort to purge them from voting rolls was racially discriminatory.

The Nuwaubians, a predominantly black quasi-religious group, have a rural compound in

Putnam County. County officials had accused them of trying to stack the voter roles with nonresidents to boost their clout in local elections.

Nuwaubian leader York working on his public image

**The Macon Telegraph /July 22, 2001
By Rob Peecher**

Eatonton --- Malachi York, the leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, is undergoing his latest metamorphosis --- associating himself with a new organization and reworking his public image.

York, the leader of the self-styled fraternal organization, has in recent weeks been identified as the "imperial grand potentate of the International Supreme Council of Shriners" and has been tied to the numerous recent charitable activities of the "Al Mahdi Shrine Temple No. 19."

York, who Nuwaubians now say is their retired pastor, has been called in Nuwaubian literature the group's savior and has been the leader of the group since before its move from New York to Putnam County in 1993.

York's public image in recent years has been marred by conflicts between the Nuwaubians and Putnam County's governing officials over building and zoning disputes. Some of the Nuwaubians' leading members have pleaded guilty to or been convicted of criminal charges in Eatonton and Milledgeville. But in recent weeks, York and Al Mahdi Shrine Temple No. 19 have been publicizing their involvement in charitable activities in Macon, Eatonton and Athens.

While York is the self proclaimed imperial grand potentate of the International Supreme Council of Shriners Inc., presumably the sanctioning body for the Al Mahdi temple, more traditional Shriners do not recognize the Al Mahdi Shrine Temple as being legitimate.

Gary Lemmons, grand master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons for the State of Georgia, said there are four recognized Shrine temples in Georgia.

"The organization functioning in and about Middle Georgia, known as Al Mahdi Shrine Temple No. 19, is not one of those" four, Lemmons said. "The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons for the State of Georgia does not recognize the organization known as Al Mahdi Shrine Temple No. 19 as Masonic or Shrine affiliated."

Last weekend, Al Mahdi Shrine Temple No. 19, with York present, donated \$20,000 to the Make-A-Wish Foundation, according to a news release from the Al Mahdi Shrine Temple and media reports. The \$20,000 was raised during a July 4 "Olympics" for handicapped children and adults, according to the news release.

The group, along with the Black Men of Athens, also donated some 3,000 cans of food to the Northeast Georgia Food Bank, the Athens Area Emergency Food Bank and the Salvation Army Homeless Shelter, all located in Athens, where York lives.

Marshall Chance, a pastor with Holy Tabernacle Ministries, another Nuwaubian-affiliated group, said there is no connection between the Nuwaubians and Al Mahdi Shrine Temple No. 19. Instead, Chance said, Al Mahdi donated \$10,000 to the Holy Tabernacle Ministries to pay for electricity bills.

"As far as it being a Nuwaubian type thing, I don't think so," Chance said. "To refer to them as Nuwaubians would actually take away from what they're doing as Shriners."

Nuwaubians in the News

Chance said he saw reports on television about the \$20,000 Make-A-Wish Foundation donation, and "we were able to get in touch with (Al Mahdi), and they gave us \$10,000 for our children's fund."

Thomas Chism, who identified himself as grand potentate of Al Mahdi No. 19, also denied to Athens Banner-Herald reporter Jim Thompson that the Nuwaubians and Al Mahdi are linked, according to Thompson. But Chism was at one time York's agent responsible for obtaining building permits at the Nuwaubians' 476-acre village at 404 Shady Dale Road in Putnam County --- the same address identified as the "Al Mahdi Shrine Park" in a news release.

In April 2000, Chism was convicted of giving false statements and writings and banished from the Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit, of which Putnam County is a part, for three years. Al Woodall, the current agent for the property owners of the village, known by Nuwaubians as "Tama-Re" or "Egypt of the West," is president of the Black Men of Athens.

Several Nuwaubian and Al Mahdi Shrine Temple contacts did not return calls or refused to comment about York's new group or its connection to the Nuwaubians. But a news release from the Al Mahdi Shrine Temples claims the "thousands" of charitable dollars being raised by the group will not be given to charities in Putnam County because of the problems the Nuwaubians have had there.

"Because of the ongoing battle between the Nuwaubians and the Putnam County Officials that have shown outright racism against the fraternal group, planned intentions to donate to the local organizations here in Putnam have been aborted. All donations will go to charities in other counties in Georgia," the news release stated.

"We will raise thousands of dollars from all over the world for the benefit of physically disabled children," the news release continued. "It's a loss for the residents of Putnam County that they allowed Sheriff (Howard) Sills and Francis

Nearn Ford with their seemingly racist actions to interfere with the county receiving thousands of dollars. ... It is evident to see that Putnam County's natural resources are diminishing daily and many of their utilities are in need of serious repair, in actuality the county is dying."

Ford, the husband and law partner of the former county attorney, handled much of the county's litigation against the Nuwaubians. This is not the first time the Nuwaubians have linked themselves with Masons. Last year, the Nuwaubians attempted to get the "Rameses Social Club," a warehouse that has been at the heart of the legal battles between county officials and the group, permitted as a Masonic lodge.

And in May, the Nuwaubians put down \$25,000 in earnest money on the Al Sihah Shrine Temple on Poplar Street in Macon. The Shrine Temple is being sold for \$800,000, and Al Sihah Shrine attorney and member Charles Lanford said the Nuwaubians have put down another \$25,000.

"Their contract has expired," Lanford said. "They got an extension, and as consideration for that extension they put \$25,000 down. But they still haven't closed." Lanford said there are other potential buyers, but so far, no one has closed on the property. "If the Nuwaubians happen to close before (other buyers) get us on contract, then we sell to them," Lanford said.

The Al Mahdi Shrine Temple is only the latest in a long history of organizations under York. Before coming to Georgia, the group had several different names and associated itself with different religions. In 1967, York founded the Ansaar Pure Sufi mission in New York City. In 1969, the group began incorporating traditional African culture and changed its name to Nubian Islamic Hebrews.

For several years prior to coming to Georgia, the group was known as the Ansaru Allah community, a segregationist sect that incorporated Muslim traditions. York, whose given name is Dwight York, was then known as Isa Muhammad.

When the group migrated to Putnam County, Nuwaubians dressed in cowboy-type garb and claimed York was an extra-terrestrial from the planet "Rizq." Since then, the Nuwaubians have claimed heritage to Native Americans and ancient Egyptians.

Members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors have decried claims by Putnam County officials and others that the group is a cult and instead refer to themselves as a fraternal organization, sometimes claiming to be a religion and sometimes denying it.

At a glance:

The Nuwaubians, primarily consisting of African Americans, first came to Putnam County in 1993 from Brooklyn, N.Y., where they were known as the Ansaru Allah community, a sect which incorporated Muslim traditions. Nuwaubian leader Malachi York was then known as Isa Muhammad.

Nuwaubians initially dressed in cowboy-type garb and claimed York was an extra-terrestrial from the planet "Rizq." The group has since claimed heritage to the Native Americans and the Egyptians. At times they claim to be a religious group but at others say they are a fraternal organization. In some Nuwaubian literature, York is referred to as their savior or god.

Commission fails to reach Nuwaubian rezoning decision

**Macon Telegraph/October 17, 2001
By Rob Peecher**

Eatonton -- The zoning status of a portion of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors' 476-acre village remains in limbo after Putnam County

Commission members Tuesday made three motions on a rezoning request that weren't seconded, and a fourth motion ended in a tie vote.

The nine owners of the village sought to have 1.6 acres rezoned from residential to agricultural and another 10.67 acres rezoned from agricultural to residential.

Commissioner Howard McMichael was absent from Tuesday's zoning hearing, and three remaining commission members each made a separate motion on the request. Commission Chairman Steve Layson, who made no motions but did finally second the fourth motion, said after the meeting he was not sure what the tie vote meant.

"We're going to have to get an opinion on that; I'm not quite sure," Layson said.

County Attorney Bob Prior said to Layson after the hearing, "This was a mass confusion."

Commissioner Sylbie Yon, who has worked with the Nuwaubians on their continuing building and zoning problems, made a motion to defer any decision until about 20 buildings or structures on the property are brought into compliance with county ordinances. Her motion failed for lack of a second.

Commissioner Sandra Adams made a motion to deny the rezoning request, which initially failed for lack of a second.

Commissioner Jimmy Davis made an unseconded motion to table the request until the next meeting to give the Nuwaubians time to get a deed showing the nine property owners do actually own the property. Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills, who spoke against the rezoning request, said it is his opinion that the property owners do not have good title to the land.

After the three motions failed for lack of a second, Layson asked Adams to restate her motion to deny the request. Layson then

seconded her motion. Davis and Yon voted against the motion, and the issue was at an end.

Frank Ford, an attorney whose wife and law partner was county attorney and who represented the county in much of its litigation during the past four years, said he believes no action was taken because the final vote, ending in a tie, was no different than the motions that failed for lack of a second.

Under a normal denial of a rezoning request, Ford said, an applicant has to wait six months to a year before bringing the request back before the commission. Ford said he believes, based on the tie vote, that no action was taken Tuesday, and therefore the Nuwaubians could bring the request back before the commission at its next rezoning hearing.

Ralph Goldberg, the attorney who has represented the Nuwaubians in the bulk of their litigation with the county about zoning and building disputes, said he believed the commission denied the request but would "hate to argue with Frank Ford on county procedure."

Al Woodall, who presented the request to the commission, said the Nuwaubians needed the rezoning as the first step to bring at least two of their buildings into compliance with county codes.

Robbie Howell, the county engineer, told the commission nearly 20 buildings or structures on the property are not in compliance.

Sills told the commission that the Nuwaubians were seeking the rezoning in an effort to circumvent a court-ordered injunction he obtained that forbids use of one of the buildings until it is brought into compliance.

Sills also said the request should be rejected because the nine individuals who claim ownership of the property have no standing to make a rezoning request because the title they hold is bad.

The Putnam County Planning and Zoning Commission last month recommended the County Commission deny the request.

Nuwaubian Broad Street building on hold

Athens Banner-Herald/December 15, 2001

By Janis Reid

Construction on the building on West Broad Street intended for a United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors lodge may be lagging or even on hold according to sources close to the project.

The quasi-religious sect has operated a compound in the Putnam County town of Eatonton since 1993 and combines elements of black empowerment, biblical themes, Egyptian polytheism and alien visitation. The Broad Street property was deeded to Nuwaubian Nation founder Malachi Z. York on March 31, 2000.

While the building was originally intended as a Nuwaubian meeting lodge, a renovation permit listing the intended use as a bookstore was issued for the 6,000-square-foot building in April of this year.

Athens-Clarke County building inspectors have not received a request for required interim inspections of electrical, plumbing and other systems at the 815 W. Broad St. location since Oct. 8, according to Ken Hix, director of the county's building inspections department.

It is not unusual for a building project to go two months without an inspection, Hix said, suggesting that construction delays might account for the lack of inspection requests.

If no work is done on a construction project for six months -- a rare occurrence, Hix said -- inspectors have the option to hold an administrative hearing to discontinue the building permit.

According to county records, the project is being handled by Macon-based construction company, Nu-waubian General Contractor.

A man working for the contracting company said Friday that the project was on hold because the Nuwaubians are focusing on new projects in Macon.

Those projects include the purchase of the Al Sihah Shrine Temple in Macon, according to Thomas Chism, a member of the Nuwaubian group and owner of All Eyes on Egypt, an Atlanta Highway bookstore and gift shop.

Some members of the Nuwabian group have organized as the Al Mahdi Shrine Temple. Chism said the Nuwaubians and the Al Mahdi Shrine Temple are not affiliated.

The Macon Telegraph reported in May that \$25,000 in earnest money had been paid to the Al Sihah Shriners for the 71-year-old temple building and two parking lots included in the property. Whether the purchase has been finalized could not be established Friday.

Chism said despite the group's projects in Macon, construction is on schedule for the Broad Street building.

He said work has focused on the interior of the building and he expects construction to be complete in the first months of 2002. Chism said he will be moving his bookstore to the Broad Street location.

Nuwaubian leader pleads not guilty

Macon Telegraph/May 9, 2002
By Rob Peecher

United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors leader Malachi York and his wife Kathy Johnson pleaded not guilty Thursday to charges that they were involved in transporting minors across state lines for sex.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Claude W. Hicks Jr. said he will consider the issue of bond at a hearing Monday because the U.S. Attorney's office is opposing bond. Hicks also provided the defendants copies of a sentencing guideline prepared by the federal probation office. Though the sentencing guidelines may change, Johnson faces 70 to 87 months in prison and York faces 135 to 168 months in prison.

York and Johnson were arrested Wednesday in Baldwin County by federal agents. York is accused in a four-count indictment of transporting children from New York to Putnam County for the purpose of sex and at a separate time from Putnam County to Florida, also for the purpose of sexual activity. Johnson is a co-defendant in only one of the counts.

Following the arrests Wednesday afternoon, federal agents and officers from several Middle Georgia sheriff's offices stormed the 476-acre Nuwaubian village in rural Putnam County. During the raid on the village, only one other person was taken into custody - a man identified as being wanted in Gwinnett County - but authorities spent several hours on the property confiscating potential evidence.

Arrest Nuwaubians' latest trouble

**Group has had confrontational,
controversial history in Putnam**

**Macon Telegraph/May 9, 2002
By Rob Peecher**

Eatonton -- Wednesday's arrest of United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors leader Malachi York is the latest in a long string of troubles for the fraternal organization and Putnam County.

For more than nine years, York and his followers have been at the center of one controversy after another, involving massive amounts of litigation in both state and federal courts. County officials have accused people associated with the group of incidents of harassment and intimidation, and Nuwaubians have repeatedly denounced county officials, alleging they discriminated against them based on their race and religion.

At various times during the conflict between the Nuwaubians and county officials, members of the fraternal organization and Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills publicly warned of the potential for a violent confrontation.

The entire controversy has centered on Malachi York, now facing state and federal charges of child molestation, and his ability to convince people to follow him.

Before coming to Putnam County in 1993, York was the leader of an Islamic sect known as the Ansaru Allah Community in New York City.

In the early 1990s, he was the subject of an FBI investigation that tied York or members of his organization to arsons, bank robberies, welfare fraud and extortion.

When York initially came to Putnam County, he claimed to be an alien from the planet "Rizq," and the Nuwaubians dressed in cowboy attire.

During his nine years in Georgia, York's organization has been known by a number of names: the Yamassee Native American Tribe, the Ancient and Mystic Order of Malchizedek, Holy Tabernacle Ministries and, most recently, the Nuwaubians have claimed to be members of the "Al Mahdi Shrine" organization and the "Holy Seed Baptist Synagogue." York has claimed heritage to Native Americans and Egyptians.

York and the Nuwaubians have made unsuccessful efforts to purchase the Shrine temple on Poplar Street and Tabernacle Baptist Church on Second Street in downtown Macon.

Black superiority a constant theme

While the group's publicly stated beliefs and associations have changed frequently, the one message in York's teachings that has remained constant since before coming to Putnam County is a message of black superiority. York repeatedly refers to whites as "the devil" and teaches that the color of their skin is caused by leprosy. In his teachings, York intertwines aspects of Islam and Christianity.

In 1997, after refusing to allow the county building inspector onto the property, the group came to the attention of newly elected Sheriff Howard Sills.

A series of lawsuits were filed, centered on a building that was issued a building permit as a 100-by-50-foot storage building that the Nuwaubians turned into a nightclub.

The lawsuits immediately set the Nuwaubians at odds with county officials. The Nuwaubians began producing hundreds of pamphlets that they distributed on the streets in Eatonton, targeting primarily county officials, judges and members of the media.

Nuwaubians in the News

Also in the pamphlets, the Nuwaubians repeatedly accused Sills of trying to spark a "Waco"-type confrontation.

The Nuwaubians have received a string of prominent supporters since spring 1999, when Joe Beasley of Jesse Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH Coalition came to Putnam County.

Jackson himself visited the Nuwaubian village a year ago. Civil rights leader Al Sharpton spoke at the village. Macon Mayor Jack Ellis has visited the village. Former state Sen. Leroy Johnson has acted as York's attorney.

State Rep. Tyrone Brooks, a Democrat and president of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials, has repeatedly spoken out in support of York. In 1999 - about the time York was ordered to appear before Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge Hugh V. Wingfield III on a contempt of court motion - Brooks sought help for York from the "Georgia Rangers."

The Rangers carried credentials stating they had arrest powers throughout the state, but the law cited is the law that provides for citizens arrests.

Shortly after the Rangers became involved in the dispute between the county and the Nuwaubians, Sills and agents of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation raided the Rangers headquarters in Atlanta and made arrests on charges ranging from possession of a firearm by a convicted felon to impersonating a public officer.

But in the past two years, the tension between county officials and the Nuwaubians has eased significantly. Dorothy Adams and Frank Ford, the attorneys who represented the county in almost all of Nuwaubian-related litigation, were fired by the county a year ago. Adams and Ford were two of the most frequent targets of the Nuwaubian fliers. A lawsuit filed by the county in 1999 ended in a bench trial earlier this year. The new county attorney, Bob Prior, assisted in creating a deed that got York dismissed as a defendant in the suit and paid the recording fee

for the deed himself at the Superior Court clerk's office.

In summer 1999, when events seemed to have reached a pivotal moment, Everett Leon Stout appeared on the scene. Stout, who at the time was a fugitive from Tennessee and connected to militia organizations, called on the county coroner to arrest the sheriff and attempted on behalf of the Nuwaubians to sue various county officials for \$1 million in a "common-law" court.

Stout's lawsuits never materialized, and he disappeared a few days later.

Timeline of Nuwaubian events

Macon Telegraph/May 9, 2002

Jan. 15, 1993 - Dwight York, aka Malachi Z. York, buys 476 acres at 404 Shady Dale Road from Arne and Sandra Gay Lassen for \$975,000. York and his followers from the Ansaaru Allah Community begin moving from Sullivan County, N.Y., to the property and surrounding communities.

Jan. 1, 1997 - Howard Sills takes office as sheriff of Putnam County.

April 10, 1997 - Nuwaubians refuse to let building inspector J.D. "Dizzy" Adams onto the property to inspect construction. When Adams returns the next day with Sills, the Nuwaubians allow them onto the property, where Adams finds a building under construction that has not been issued a permit. Victor Greig, acting as York's representative in building and zoning matters, is cited for building without a permit. The same day, Adams issues Greig a permit for a 100-by-50-foot metal storage building with limited electricity.

Nuwaubians in the News

March 9, 1998 - After seeing an Atlanta television news report about the Nuwaubians in which the "Rameses Social Club" is featured, Sills and Adams return to 404 Shady Dale Road, because the Nuwaubians had not secured permits for a nightclub. Nine days later, Greig is cited by Sills and the state fire marshal for violations regarding the nightclub. Rameses is the 100-by-50-foot metal storage building with numerous additions, including bathrooms, extensive lighting and sound equipment, larger dimensions and an Egyptian-style facade.

April 20, 1998 - Magistrate Judge Sylvia Huskins finds Greig guilty of violations of zoning and fire codes and fines him \$45,750 - a total calculated for each day that Rameses was open in violation of the codes. The Georgia Court of Appeals later reduces the fine to \$2,500 but upholds the conviction.

May 5, 1998 - Sills sues York and others at the property seeking an injunction preventing use of the Rameses nightclub. Also in May, the Nuwaubians file a zoning request in which they announce plans to build an "Egyptian theme park" comparable to Busch Gardens in Florida. That zoning request is denied in November.

Jan. 4, 1999 - Putnam County Attorney Dorothy Adams and law partner and husband Frank Ford file lawsuit 99-CV-1-1, seeking to prevent the Nuwaubians from using the property for anything other than residential or agricultural purposes. Under this lawsuit - which ends three years later - numerous contempt of court and other pleadings are filed by both sides, and a bitter battle between the county and the Nuwaubians over zoning and building permits begins. York and others are named as defendants in the suit, along with 1 to 200 John Does and 1 to 200 Jane Does, representing unnamed Nuwaubians.

May 20, 1999 - Superior Court Judge John Lee Parrott issues a permanent injunction ordering Rameses to be padlocked and not used, and giving Sills the authority to enter the property during certain hours to inspect the building. The order allows for the Nuwaubians to restore the

building to its original permitted state or to seek zoning to allow for the nightclub.

June 11, 1999 - As the annual Nuwaubian week-long celebration known as "Savior's Day" - marking York's birthday - approaches, Superior Court Judge Hugh V. Wingfield III orders York to appear in court on a contempt motion filed by the county. York does not appear as ordered June 22. Wingfield also orders several buildings on the property to be padlocked by the sheriff.

June 25, 1999 - Savior's Day celebration begins. Members are barred from entering buildings at the Nuwaubian village but proclaim, "We love the sunshine." Gov. Roy Barnes meets with Sills in Atlanta to discuss the timing of York's contempt hearing during Savior's Day.

June 29, 1999 - With some 500 Nuwaubians packed inside and outside the County Courthouse and another 200 law enforcement officers waiting at nearby locations, York appears in court for the contempt hearing. Wingfield orders the courtroom emptied of all but the principal parties. After two hours behind closed doors, attorneys for both sides emerge claiming agreements were reached. The case, however, will drag on.

Sept. 15, 1999 - Civil rights leader Al Sharpton visits the Nuwaubian village to address a crowd of about 150 Nuwaubians. Sharpton accuses county officials of persecuting Nuwaubians because of York's teachings. York makes a rare appearance before the media and delivers a speech to the crowd in which he calls white people "the devil" and says they should "go home" to Europe.

Feb. 17, 2000 - The brother of actor Wesley Snipes confirms plans to purchase more than 200 acres adjoining the Nuwaubian village, where he plans to build a "security guard training facility." A Snipes spokeswoman says the actor has no connection to the Nuwaubians. The county later denies permit requests that would have cleared the way for the sale of the land to Wesley Rudy Snipes, the actor's brother.

Nuwaubians in the News

A court action filed by the current property owner, Stanley Bishop, is still pending.

May 23, 2000 - Pauline Rogers becomes the second of two women to file child support actions claiming York is the father of her son and daughter. Though a summons was issued, York never appeared in court, and Rogers later dropped the action. The other woman, [Ms. P.], filed her action through the state Department of Human Resources' child support recovery office. Her action claims York is the father of her son. [Ms. P.] still has an action pending against York.

June 15, 2000 - The Putnam County Board of Registrars begins purging primarily Nuwaubians who the county claims no longer or never did live in the county from its voter rolls during what will become a series of meetings. The Nuwaubians claim discrimination and file a federal lawsuit, threatening to hold up the July 18 primary election. A three-judge panel sides with the county on its procedure for purging the voter rolls, allowing the election to take place. Nearly 200 people were challenged, and dozens of Nuwaubians were removed from the voter rolls.

July 18, 2000 - Despite strong opposition from Nuwaubians on election day, Sills wins 72 percent of the vote. Throughout the day, Nuwaubians crowd at intersections in Eatonton encouraging voters to elect Sills' opposition.

Oct. 16, 2000 - Nuwaubian contractor Bernard Foster is charged with slashing the tires on County Attorney Ford's vehicle at a local grocery store. Days before, a hearing had been held during which Ford said the county would issue certain building permits to the Nuwaubians. But when the Nuwaubians attempted to get the permits, the county building inspector said the group provided inadequate information. Foster pleads guilty six months later and is banished from the judicial circuit for three years.

Jan. 1, 2001 - A new slate of county commissioners take office. District 3 Commissioner Steve Layson takes over the

chairman position from Ralph Perdomo after defeating Perdomo in November. Sylbie Yon becomes the new commissioner in Layson's former district.

April 27, 2001 - Rainbow/PUSH Coalition leader Jesse Jackson visits the Nuwaubian village, pledging solidarity with Nuwaubians in ongoing zoning and building dispute. Macon Mayor Jack Ellis is among those attending Jackson's speech.

May 4, 2001 - County Commission in a 3-2 vote fires Dorothy Adams as county attorney, claiming the commission wishes to "move in a different direction," though during her four years as county attorney, the county did not lose a lawsuit. Layson and Yon say the firing does not indicate a change in policy toward the Nuwaubians.

Feb. 8, 2002 - A non-jury trial before Wingfield ends 99-CV-1-1. Wingfield gives the Nuwaubians 90 days to provide all necessary information to the county building and zoning office to obtain any building permits still outstanding. York is dismissed from suit as a quit claim deed is filed, giving ownership of the property to nine individuals who, since June 1999, have claimed to be the owners of the property. The check to pay the fee at the clerk's office to record the deed was drafted from the account of the new county attorney's law firm. New County Attorney Bob Prior says he has asked York's attorney to reimburse him the \$16.

March 7, 2002 - Now calling the Rameses nightclub a "fellowship hall" on permit applications, the Nuwaubians apply for a building permit that will clear the way for the group to begin using the building for the first time since it was padlocked in 1999. The building does not have to be taken back to its original 100-by-50-foot metal storage building status. Sills appeals the issuance of the permit; the appeal is scheduled to be heard by the Putnam County Planning and Zoning Commission next month.

May 8, 2002 - FBI agents and Putnam County sheriff's officers raid the Nuwaubian village.

Prosecutors vow to keep sect leader jailed

Atlanta Journal-Constitution/May 10, 2002
By Bill Osinski

Macon -- Nuwaubian leader Dwight York will stay in jail on child molestation charges at least until Monday, when government attorneys will argue that he should remain jailed until his trial.

York pleaded not guilty at an arraignment Thursday before U.S. Magistrate Claude Hicks, who set a bond hearing for Monday in Macon.

York's attorney, former state Sen. Leroy Johnson, said York reasserted his innocence to the charges he was arrested on Wednesday. He is charged with four counts of transporting children across state lines for the purpose of illegal sexual activity.

"Dr. York vehemently states that he has not violated any person," Johnson said. (York is often referred to by his followers as Dr. Malachi Z. York.)

The gray-bearded York, dressed in a loose fitting tan shirt and slacks, made no comment during the 15-minute hearing.

Hicks informed York and his co-defendant, associate Kathy Johnson, that they both face lengthy jail terms if convicted. York would get 11 to 14 years under federal sentencing guidelines. Johnson would be sentenced to six to seven years, Hicks said. There is no parole for

federal convictions. The government will ask that York be denied bail.

"The very nature of the offense involves interstate travel," U.S. Attorney Max Wood said, indicating that York should be considered a flight risk.

"And with the allegations involving children, and the nature of the relationships [between York and the members of his group], that raises the level of concern," Wood said.

Wood refuted published statements by supporters of the Nuwaubians that the arrests and subsequent large-scale raid on the Nuwaubian headquarters were part of any politically motivated vendetta led by Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills.

For the past five or six years, the Nuwaubians have been involved in a series of disputes with Sills and other Putnam County officials, mostly over zoning issues at the group's 400-acre farm about eight miles east of Eatonton.

There is an ongoing state investigation of York, and in that part of the case, Sills confirmed Thursday that five children who may become witnesses are in the care of the Georgia Department of Family and Children's Services and under police guard, he said.

Couple at head of Ga. sect face child-sex charges

Associated Press/May 10, 2002

Eatonton, Ga. -- The founder of a quasi-religious group that lives in a rural compound resembling an ancient Egyptian theme park was arrested yesterday on child sex charges, along with his companion.

More than 100 law enforcement agents raided the 476-acre compound of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors. Authorities declined to say what was seized.

Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills said that 80 to 100 people were on the property and that some tried to flee into the woods. There was no violence, Sills said.

The sect's leader, Dwight York, 56, and his companion, Kathy Johnson, 33, were arrested as they traveled nearby. Authorities said York describes Johnson as his wife, but there is no legal record of their marriage.

They were to appear yesterday in federal court in Macon.

The two were accused of taking minors from a similar commune in Sullivan County, N.Y., to Georgia to have sex in 1993, Sills said. York, also known as Malachi York, also faced federal charges of going from Georgia to Orlando, Fla., to have sex with a minor in 1996.

Conviction for each charge carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Sills said local warrants charging York and Johnson with aggravated child molestation would be served if the couple are released from federal custody.

York served three years in a New York jail in the 1960s for assault, resisting arrest, and carrying a concealed weapon.

He and his followers have provoked controversy since he arrived in Georgia in 1993.

County officials have clashed with the predominantly black group over how they use their land and have accused its associates of harassment and intimidation. Nuwaubians have claimed discrimination based on their race and religion.

The Nuwaubians say they are "true native Americans" descended from Egypt. About 150 to 200 people live at the compound, which York bought after moving from New York, where the group was known as the Ansaru Allah Community, a segregationist sect that incorporated Muslim traditions. York was then known as Isa Muhammad.

The Nuwaubians have erected two pyramids, a sphinx, numerous Egyptian-style statues, prefabricated houses, and other structures on the property.

When they first appeared in Putnam County, Nuwaubians dressed in cowboy-type garb and said York was an extraterrestrial from the planet Rizq. Some Nuwaubian papers refer to York as the group's savior or god.

DFACS takes custody of 5 Nuwaubian children

Macon Telegraph/May 10, 2002
By Rob Peecher

Eatonton --The Putnam County Department of Family and Children Services took five children into protective custody during Wednesday's law enforcement raid at the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors village.

The four girls and one boy taken into protective custody range in age from 13 to 16 years old, Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills said.

"We received information about these five children that was corroborated by others that caused us to seek out the protective order," Sills said. "We had an order from the Juvenile Court signed (by a judge) prior to going on the compound. The children, we suspect, are victims of child molestation."

Agents of the FBI, Putnam County sheriff's deputies and deputies from other sheriff's offices raided the village at 404 Shady Dale Road just after federal officers took Nuwaubian leader Malachi York, 56, and his wife, Kathy Johnson, 33, into custody in Baldwin County.

York and Johnson, who pleaded not guilty Thursday afternoon in a federal Magistrate Court, were arrested on warrants accusing them of transporting children for sexual purposes. York is accused in all four counts of the federal indictment and Johnson in one.

Additional state warrants accuse York of 10 counts of aggravated child molestation and Johnson with one count of aggravated child molestation. Those state warrants have not yet been served.

Middle District of Georgia U.S. Magistrate Judge Claude W. Hicks Jr. said the only possible plea for York and Johnson to enter during Thursday's hearing was not guilty, and Hicks said he will consider bond for the two in a hearing scheduled for Monday.

Hicks also provided York and Johnson with prison sentence ranges calculated by federal probation officers and based on federal sentencing guidelines. Johnson faces a sentence of between five years, 10 months and seven years, three months. York faces a sentence of between 11 years, three months and 14 years in a federal prison. Hicks added, though, that the ranges could change based on a review of the circumstances.

About a dozen of York's supporters attended the hearing, and one woman let out an audible gasp as York and Johnson were both led into the courtroom with restraints on their wrists and ankles.

During Thursday's hearing, York and Johnson both were represented by former state Sen. Leroy Johnson and his associate attorney Karen Haines. Hicks said he warns all co-defendants who come before him that using one attorney to represent both defendants has "pitfalls," as "competing interests" may arise during the course of the trial.

Wednesday's raid was prompted by state and federal search warrants giving law officers the authority to take control of the property and search it, but that search ended abruptly when authorities received information that Nuwaubians were preparing to retake the village by force, Sills said.

"The search was probably not as thorough as it could have been," Sills said. "The FBI received direct information that the Nuwaubians were going to arm themselves, mass and try to retake the compound. I immediately blocked the road again, and it was reported to me that we had a couple hundred of them massed at either side of the roadblocks."

Sills said that although he felt confident that the law enforcement presence at the village, which at that time consisted of about half of some 150 federal and local officers involved in the initial raid, could have prevailed in a confrontation, it would have meant "unnecessary bloodshed."

Authorities decided to conclude their search rather than risk a confrontation, Sills said.

Sills said he saw "maybe one-50th" of the potential evidence taken from the property, but he was aware of hundreds of videotapes being confiscated, computers and numerous weapons, ranging from handguns to assault rifles.

"In York's bedroom alone, there were at least three assault rifles and other assorted handguns and what I would call regular long guns," Sills said. "In their barn where the men live, they had a lot of (weapons) in it."

The evidence taken from the village is still in federal custody and has to be examined to determine its value, Sills said.

Omer Reid, president of the Baldwin County chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, attended Thursday's hearing and reiterated statements made by some of York's supporters Wednesday.

"Nothing has been proven," Reid said. "There are only allegations ... I don't think (York's) character should be demeaned in any way."

Sills rebuked criticism by some of York's supporters that the raid was politically motivated or had to do with a desire on his part to "destroy the Nuwaubians."

"We have victims of what our society has always considered to be one of the most deplorable acts," Sills said. "The victims came to us. The victims tried to get help.

"I am charged with the duty to protect the lives, property and morals of the people of this county. Now, if a person charged with that duty carries out that duty if that is in some way a vendetta

or harassment, then those people need to examine their morals, if that's what they think."

Five Kids May Speak in Nuwaubian Trial

11 Alive/May 10, 2002
By Jaye Watson

Five children likely to testify in the case against the founder of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors in middle Georgia are in the custody of child welfare officials.

Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills said the five are being kept under police guard.

Meanwhile, on Thursday, two principal members of the Egyptian-based religious sect pleaded not guilty in a Macon, Ga., courtroom to allegations they took minors across state lines for sex.

Federal agents arrested Dwight D. York, 56, the leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, Wednesday before raiding his group's property in central Georgia.

They also arrested a member of the group and York's longtime associate, 33-year-old Kathy Johnson.

After his arraignment in U.S. District Court, York was led out of the courtroom in shackles and handcuffs to be transported back to the Bibb County jail.

Investigators say York and Johnson transported girls under the age of 16 from New York to the compound in Putnam County for sex in 1993.

That's the same year York left New York to found the Nuwaubian Nation in rural Putnam County.

York also faces extra charges of transporting and one count that accuses him of traveling to Florida to have sex with a minor.

Most of the courtroom was filled with members of the Nuwaubian group, although none wanted to speak publicly about the allegations.

One supporter, Omer Reed, told 11Alive News, "I mean they are gentle people. They are easy to get along with. I've never seen anyone with alcoholic beverages on the place. I've never witnessed anything that was degrading."

York and Johnson are due back in court on Monday for a detention hearing, at which time a judge will decide if they can be released on bail.

Each count carries a maximum penalty of not more than 15 years in jail, and not more than a \$250,000 fine.

Prior Conflicts

Members of The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors have sparred with Putnam officials for years concerning building and zoning permits -- and have even sued Putnam Sheriff Howard Sills over the matter.

The Nuwaubians, a religious sect noted for building Egyptian-style pyramids, maintain a complex located southeast of Atlanta and northeast of Macon.

The group bought 476 acres of land west of Eatonton in 1993 -- calling it the "Egypt of the West." The property now has a "for sale" sign in front.

Last year, the Putnam sheriff's department investigated alleged threats by Nuwaubians against officials in the department, but did not find any criminal violations.

A voting controversy also involved the group two years ago. The Nuwaubians filed a federal lawsuit against the county after officials there removed more than 120 members from the voting rolls.

The group claimed the move was racially-motivated, but county officials said the Nuwaubians were trying to stack the voter rolls with members from outside the county to boost their clout in local elections.

The case was eventually dismissed.

Lawsuits overshadow Nuwaubian leader

**Augusta Chronicle/May 11, 2002
By Stephen Gurr**

Eatonton, Ga.-- They called him "The Love Man," and his followers hung on his words as prophecy. Dwight York, or Malachi York-El, the spiritual figurehead of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, was more than just a cult leader from Brooklyn.

He was a self-professed teacher and philosopher, a man of many faces and names. He dabbled in writing and music promotion and fancied himself a sort of new-age Marvin Gaye with his female singer-backed outfit, "Dr. York and She."

He threw Nuwaubian celebrations at Athens' Classic Center, and thousands flocked to his Savior's Day rallies in Eatonton each summer.

Now, Mr. York, 56, is in federal custody on child sex charges, suspected of molesting girls as young as 11 at his rural Putnam County compound. His followers, more than 100 in all, watched Wednesday as federal agents raided the

Nuwaubians in the News

quasi-Egyptian camp, carting out a trailer full of evidence yet to be examined. The future of Mr. York's group is in question.

"If he is found guilty, it would be a significant blow to the organization," said Monticello attorney Ronny E. Jones, who represented Mr. York in a land dispute with Putnam County and now says Mr. York owes him some \$15,000 in legal fees. "If he's really taken out of the picture for a significant amount of time, I think it would just dissolve."

Mr. Jones has a case pending in Clarke County Superior Court against Mr. York, who lived for a time in Athens in a \$528,000 home off Timothy Road. His is one of three civil suits filed against Mr. York in Clarke County over the past three years.

Two women claimed Mr. York failed to pay child support for three children he fathered. One case was closed by the custodial parent, while the other was transferred to the Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit in Putnam County because deputies were unable to serve Mr. York with the suit in Clarke County.

"(According to a) housekeeper, Mr. York does not live here anymore because so many people are looking for him," reads a note written by a Clarke County sheriff's deputy on one child support claim that went undelivered at Mr. York's listed address.

"He's a slippery person," said Mr. Jones, who said he suspects Mr. York knew he was under investigation.

In 1996, according to Mr. York's former lawyer, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation paid Mr. York a visit to make sure he wouldn't cause any trouble during the Olympics.

"They were interviewing any group that might cause a problem during the Olympics," Mr. Jones said. "He assured them that they were a peaceful group."

Mr. Jones added that while he heard rumors of weapons being stockpiled at the Eatonton compound, he saw no such evidence.

The latest allegations are said to be the result of a four-year inquiry. They might have their roots in an anonymous whistle-blower within the Nuwaubian sect. In 1998 or 1999, an anonymous person who claimed to be a former member of Mr. York's group sent letters to various people in Putnam County accusing him of child molestation.

Eatonton attorney Frank Ford, who represented Putnam County in several legal battles with Mr. York, received one such letter, which he described as a cry for help.

"I could see these were very serious allegations," Mr. Ford said. "It basically said he was having sex with 11-, 12- and 13-year-old girls and in some cases impregnating them."

Mr. Ford said it was claimed in the letter, which he turned over to law authorities, that parents of the children "were just offering them up" to Mr. York.

A grand jury has yet to convene in Eatonton to consider bringing state charges of child molestation, which is not covered under federal law. Currently, Mr. York faces federal charges of the transporting of underage girls across state lines for the purpose of sex.

In Athens, the most visible sign of Mr. York's influence is the faux-Moorish structure at the corner of West Broad and Church streets. Originally envisioned as a lodge for the Nuwaubians, it is now intended to be a bookstore with an office and break room, according to public documents.

After six months without any work done on the site, workers have been seen in recent weeks doing masonry work on the exterior.

Mr. York's former legal nemesis Mr. Ford said this week's criminal charges could bring real upheaval among the true believers. In the past,

he said, anyone charged with a crime was immediately cast out from the group.

"What will their reaction be now?" he asked.

FBI: Dozens Molested by Sect Leader

The Associated Press/May 13, 2002
By Kyle Wingfield

Macon, Ga. -- The leader of a religious group molested dozens of children, some as young as 4, at the sect's compound over the past nine years, an FBI agent testified at a bail hearing Monday.

Dwight York, founder of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, and his partner, Kathy Johnson, are seeking bail on federal charges alleging they transported minors across state lines for sex beginning in 1993, the year the group settled in central Georgia.

FBI agent Jalaine Ward testified that three children told her they were forced to perform oral sex and other acts with York, 56, and Johnson, 33.

The children, ages 4, 6 and 8 at the time, were photographed and videotaped engaging in sexual acts and posing in sexually explicit positions, she said.

Ward said witnesses told also investigators that 30 to 35 children ages 4 to 18 were molested. She said York brought some children to the compound from New York. He also took 15 to 20 trips to Disney World in Florida over the past four years, taking minors with him and abusing them there, she said.

The hearing is scheduled to resume Tuesday.

York and Johnson were arrested last Wednesday a few miles from the 476-acre Nuwaubian compound in rural Putnam County. At about the same time, more than 100 officers raided the compound and said they seized at least 30 handguns and rifles.

The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors is a predominantly black, quasi-religious group. The compound featured six-story pyramids and a large gate bearing Egyptian-style hieroglyphics.

In some Nuwaubian literature, York has been referred to as the group's savior or god and described as an extraterrestrial from the planet "Rizq."

More than 100 people lived in the compound but York and Johnson were the only ones arrested.

Ward said children at the compound were separated from their parents at an early age, with visitation dictated by York. He also controlled devotees' money, food and clothing, dictated where they lived and when they could enter and leave the compound. Men and women could not talk or have sex without his permission.

The children who were abused were "treated more specially than children who weren't involved in sexual activities with York," Ward testified.

York faces four counts of sexual exploitation of minors. The maximum penalty for each count is 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Johnson faces one charge.

The Nuwaubians have clashed with Putnam County officials for years over building codes, voter registration and the group's hiring of armed security guards. This is the first time York has been arrested in Georgia, though he served time in New York in the 1960s for assault, resisting arrest and possession of a dangerous weapon, authorities said.

FBI: Kids from 4 to 18 abused in sect

Atlanta Journal-Constitution/May 14, 2002

By Bill Osinski

Eatonton --- The child molestation case against Nuwaubian leader Dwight York escalated Monday in state and federal court.

In Eatonton, a Putnam County grand jury issued a 116-count indictment of the 56-year-old leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a quasi-religious group whose 150 to 200 members live in a rural compound that features huge pyramids and a large gate covered with hieroglyphics.

York was charged with 74 counts of child molestation, 29 counts of aggravated child molestation and related charges, including one count of rape.

In Macon, an FBI agent testified at a bond hearing in U.S. District Court that authorities have identified as many as 35 victims, whose age at the time of the alleged crimes ranged from 4 to 18.

York is in federal custody after being arrested Wednesday by FBI agents in Baldwin County as an army of federal and local officers swooped down on the compound in Putnam County. York's associate, Kathy Johnson, who was arrested with him on the federal charges, also was named in five counts of the state indictment.

Three other members of the Nuwaubian group -- identified as Chandra Lampkin, Kadijah Merritt and Esther Cole --- were indicted on state charges of child molestation.

Fred Bright, district attorney for the judicial circuit that includes Putnam County, said the state indictment accuses York of molesting at

least five children repeatedly "and in just about every way imaginable."

The indictments crown a four-year investigation by the FBI and the Putnam County sheriff's office. It began when a local social service agency received anonymous allegations that children were being sexually abused at the Nuwaubians' 400-acre ranch.

York and the Nuwaubians have frequently criticized Putnam County authorities for what they contend is racial discrimination and harassment.

Assistant District Attorney Dawn Baskin said there were no ulterior motives to the state's charges.

"There's nothing political about child molestation," she said.

All the alleged crimes were committed at the Nuwaubian compound, Bright said.

FBI agent Jalaine Ward testified at the bond hearing in federal court in Macon regarding the scope of the government's case against York.

York Said to Have Ruled with Iron Hand

The government has statements from approximately 15 witnesses who testified that York sodomized and had sexual intercourse with children, Ward testified. In some of these encounters, the acts were photographed and videotaped, she said.

The agent's testimony depicted a long-standing pattern of York's having sex with children within his community.

The incidents started at his group's bases in New York and continued after the sect moved in 1993 to a Putnam County farm and --- in the alleged acts that make this case a federal matter --- during an estimated 15 to 20 trips to Disney World in Florida over the past four years, investigators say.

"York controls everything that goes on" at the compound, Ward said, summarizing witness descriptions of life at the former cattle ranch, which the Nuwaubians have decorated with Egyptian-style pyramids and statuary. In some Nuwaubian literature, York is called the group's savior or god.

Ward said York controlled what and how much his followers ate, how much money they were permitted, and whether they could come and go at the compound.

The federal prosecutor wants to deny York bail, but U.S. Magistrate Judge Claude Hicks indicated he would not rule on that matter before today, when the bond hearing resumes.

Hicks ruled that defense attorneys could review the 50-page affidavit used to support York's arrest, but he also gave prosecutors time to black out the names of victims mentioned in the document.

Defense Lawyer Demands to See Papers

Defense attorney Ed Garland of Atlanta argued he should have access to unedited versions of the federal investigative document.

"We are here, really, in the dark," Garland told the court. "If a confidential informant is also a victim, then they are not entitled to be shielded."

Hicks rejected that argument, but Garland renewed his demand for the documents as he started to cross-examine Ward. It was then the hearing was adjourned for the day.

In her testimony, the FBI agent said children typically were separated from adults at the Nuwaubian compound. They were not allowed contact with their natural parents without York's permission, she said.

Witnesses have stated that Johnson, York's associate, was an active participant in some of the sex acts with the children, Ward said. Johnson brought children to York for sex and

instructed them on sexual techniques, the agent said.

Ward also testified that some of the children were intimidated and threatened by York. One of the females who accused York said he "threatened to shoot her in the head" if she reported the sexual abuse to authorities, Ward said.

In a search of the farm conducted last week during the massive raid by authorities, federal agents confiscated more than 30 weapons, about a dozen of which were found in York's house, Ward testified.

Warrants Issued for Sect Women

**11 Alive/May 14, 2002
By Valerie Hoff**

Officials in Putnam County, Ga., have issued warrants for three women wanted in connection with an ongoing child molestation case involving the leaders of the Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

The three women face state charges of child molestation along with the sect leader, 56-year-old Dwight York, and his wife, Kathy.

Police say Chaundra Lampkin, Kadijah Merritt, and Esther Cole helped deliver young girls to York for sexual purposes.

Authorities believe one of the women may be in the Atlanta area and another in the Athens area.

A member of the Nuwaubian nation who grew up at the sect's massive compound questioned the allegations in an interview with 11Alive's Valerie Hoff on Tuesday.

"It was peaceful. It was calm. There were many people from all over the world. I got to research and do a lot of different studies. It was nice. It was not biased. It was very unbiased and open minded and the people were nice," said Darcinda Tyus.

Tyus called York a caring and loving leader, not a child molester.

"I have never, ever heard any of the young girls my age, younger than that or older, heard anything, any type of sexual molestation, fondling or touching," she said.

Tyus added that the charges are racially motivated, which the county sheriff adamantly denied.

"I am tired and I am sick of the race card being played against me and anybody else. There's not one shred of evidence. It is an opportunistic thing being used by individuals responsible for heinous criminal activity," said Sheriff Howard Sills in a television interview Tuesday.

Sills went on to call the Nuwaubians members of a cult, although he said accusations that he's trying to run them out of Putnam County are not true.

"I know of no legal mechanism to shut something down that in reality doesn't exist. There's no such thing. What is a Nuwaubian? You know. There is no such thing as a Nuwaubian Nation. It's the United States of America. That's the only nation I know of where we are here today."

Sheriff Sills made comparisons between the Nuwaubians and the Branch Davidian cult, whose members perished during a federal raid in 1993.

He said more charges against members of the Putnam County compound could still be filed.

Religious Sect Faces 116 New Counts

11 Alive/May 14, 2002

A state case is now unfolding against the leader of a Putnam County religious sect and three of his followers, who in total face 116 counts of child molestation, authorities said.

Fifty-six-year-old Dwight York, the leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, is named in a state indictment handed down Monday against himself and three other Nuwaubians.

Chaundra Lampkin faces three counts of child molestation and two counts of aggravated child molestation. Kadijah Merritt faces three counts of child molestation and two counts of aggravated child molestation.

Esther Cole faces one count of child molestation, officials said.

All four are expected to appear in court soon on the state charges.

York, Wife Await Bond Decision

York and 33-year-old Kathy Johnson, one of his wives, appeared in a federal court Tuesday in Macon, Ga., for the second day of their bond hearing.

Federal agents arrested York and Johnson on May 8, and charged them with trafficking a minor across state lines for sex. An indictment handed down earlier that day accused the couple of taking teens from Sullivan County, New York, to Putnam County, Ga., and from Georgia to Orlando, Fla., in order to engage in illegal sexual acts.

On Monday, the first day of the bond hearing, special FBI agent Jalaine Ward spoke in graphic detail about York and Johnson's alleged assaults on the children of the sect's followers.

Ward said the incidents started in March 1993 in New York, and continued in Georgia after York moved his followers to the state during that same year.

York, who told his followers to refer to him as their god, and Johnson have had older children help them molest the younger children, Ward said.

Defense: York, Johnson 'Absolutely Innocent'

Speaking about both York and Johnson, defense attorney Ed Garland said they are "complete, totally and absolutely innocent of these charges."

"Our position will be clearly that a bond is appropriate, that there is no danger to the community, that in fact the reverend is a valued and important part of the community," Garland said.

York also faces three counts of traveling in order to have sex with a minor in Orlando. Each count carries a maximum penalty of not more than 15 years in jail, and not more than a \$250,000 fine.

In addition to the federal charges, York and Johnson also face at least ten counts of aggravated child molestation at the state level.

Agent Details Nuwaubian Abuse

The Augusta Chronicle/May 14, 2002

The jailed leader of a middle Georgia religious group molested dozens of children, some as young as 4, during the past nine years, an FBI agent testified Monday.

United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors founder Dwight York and his partner, Kathy Johnson, are seeking bail on charges they transported

minors across state lines for sex beginning in 1993, the year his group settled in rural Putnam County. The hearing, which will continue in federal court today, was held less than a week after more than 100 officers raided the Nuwaubian compound.

FBI Agent Jalaine Ward testified that three children told her they were forced to perform oral sex and other acts with Mr. York, 56, and Ms. Johnson, 33. The children, ages 4, 6 and 8 at the time, were photographed and videotaped engaging in sexual acts and posing in sexually explicit positions, she said.

Children at the compound were separated from their parents at an early age, with visitation dictated by Mr. York, Agent Ward testified. He also controlled devotees' money, food and clothing, dictated where they lived, and when they could enter and leave the compound. Also, men could not talk to or have sex with women without his permission.

The children who were abused were "treated more specially than children who weren't involved in sexual activities with York," Agent Ward said, adding that they were forced to watch pornographic cartoons. Some said they tried hiding in closets and under beds to avoid Mr. York.

Agent Ward said witnesses told investigators that 30 to 35 children ages 4 to 18 were molested during the past decade. She said Mr. York brought some children to the compound from New York. He also took 15 to 20 trips to Disney World in Florida in the past four years, transporting minors with him and abusing them there.

The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors is a predominantly black, quasi-religious group whose members live in a rural compound resembling an ancient Egyptian theme park, with huge pyramids and a large gate covered with hieroglyphics. In some Nuwaubian literature, Mr. York has been referred to as the group's savior or god and as an extraterrestrial from the planet "Rizq."

Mr. York and Ms. Johnson were arrested Wednesday as they traveled a few miles from the 476-acre compound. Officers seized at least 30 handguns and rifles during the raid, the FBI said.

Mr. York, who also calls himself Malachi, faces four counts involving sexual exploitation of minors. The maximum penalty for each charge is 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Ms. Johnson faces one charge.

Defense attorneys' cross-examination of Agent Ward was delayed until this morning after U.S. Magistrate Judge Claude Hicks ruled that prosecutors had to turn over the affidavits they presented to obtain a warrant to search the Nuwaubians' Eatonton compound.

Mr. York's attorney Ed Garland said reviewing the affidavits and presenting character witnesses today will show that his client deserves to be free on bond.

Bail Is Denied for Sect Leader Accused of Molesting Children

New York Times/May 15, 2002
By David Firestone

Atlanta -- The leader of a black religious sect based in an isolated rural Georgia compound was denied bail today after federal prosecutors said he had molested dozens of children in the last decade.

Dwight Z. York, the spiritual leader of a group called the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, was charged by a state grand jury on Monday with 74 counts of child molestation, along with

rape charges. Mr. York was arrested last week by the F.B.I. on federal charges of sexual exploitation of minors.

Mr. York has denied the charges.

The arrest is the latest clash between the authorities and the 150-member group since it moved in 1993 from the Bushwick section of Brooklyn to a 400-acre ranch in Putnam County, about 65 miles southeast of Atlanta. Group members have long said they were being persecuted by white authorities because of their race.

There have been several standoffs over the years when county officials tried to investigate zoning violations on the property, like operating a nightclub and retail stores on land zoned for agricultural use.

Neighbors have complained about a 40-foot pyramid the group erected on the Egyptian-themed compound, along with statues of ancient gods.

But the complaints against the group were never particularly serious until last week, when F.B.I. agents raided the compound and arrested Mr. York and his companion, Kathy Johnson, after a four-year investigation prompted by a complaint to a local social services agency. The authorities said they believed that as many as 35 children, ages 4 to 18, had been molested by Mr. York.

An F.B.I. agent, Jalaine Ward, said that the government had testimony from 15 witnesses who said Mr. York molested the children and that some of the acts could be documented with videotapes and photographs. Some of the children are expected to testify against Mr. York.

At today's hearing, several of Mr. York's followers testified that they knew of no sexual abuse, and doctors for the group said they had seen no signs of molestation.

Mr. York's lawyer, Leroy Johnson, said he had seen no evidence to back up the government's

charges, and he said some of the children had been coached by the group's enemies to lie about Mr. York.

"He was black in a white community," Mr. Johnson said, "and he had the audacity to put up those huge statues. When that was done, it created a fear in the mind of those folks there against this group."

The Putnam County sheriff, Howard Sills, denied that race had had anything to do with the charges.

"There's not one shred of evidence of that," Sheriff Sills said. "It is an opportunistic thing being used by individuals responsible for heinous crimes."

After the hearing, Claude Hicks, a federal magistrate, refused to release Mr. York on bail, saying there was probable cause to believe that abuse would continue if he were released.

Mr. York is a felon who served three years in prison in the 1960's for resisting arrest, assault and possession of a dangerous weapon. In the late 1980's and early 1990's, he led a mosque on Bushwick Avenue in Brooklyn, where his followers, sometimes clad in long white robes and armed with shotguns, guarded the building.

Putnam County members work to bolster better image of United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors

Savannah Morning News/May 15, 2002

By Kevin Conner

Eatonton -- Members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors spent much of Mother's Day handing out literature alleging a government conspiracy in last week's police raid at the group's compound in rural Putnam County.

Last Wednesday, police arrested the group's leader, Dwight York -- also known as Malachi York -- and his companion, Kathy Johnson, on charges of sexual exploitation of minors. York and Johnson are accused of transporting minors from out of state to Georgia for sexual purposes.

The arrests came just prior to a raid on the Shady Dale Road compound, which features two pyramids, a sphinx and other Egyptian-style construction.

The sect has Athens ties, with construction of a Nuwaubian bookstore still ongoing on West Broad Street. People were seen working on the faux-Moorish structure Sunday. York also owns a \$525,000 home on Mansfield Court that was searched by federal authorities Wednesday.

In a search of York's Athens home off Timothy Road, federal agents found some \$128,000 in cash, Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Nuwaubians were spread throughout Eatonton on Sunday, handing out the flyers at places like Sumpter and Oconee streets, the Ingles shopping center on Georgia Highway 16 and a shopping center near downtown that has a Family Dollar, Food Max and CVS Pharmacy.

"We don't give interviews," said a Nuwaubian man dressed in black and handing out flyers at the corner of Sumpter and Oconee streets. Several other Nuwaubians at various locations also refused interviews.

The flyer likened the raid tactics used by federal agents and the Putnam County Sheriff's

Department to the 1993 police raid on the Branch Davidian complex in Waco, Texas.

The flyer alleged the FBI and sheriff's department had entered the village to gather testimonial evidence against York and Johnson and held village residents "hostage" through the afternoon and night. The flyer -- no author was mentioned -- stressed that Nuwaubians are peaceful and shouldn't have been subjected to the large-scale raid.

"Everyone was told that they were not in trouble, and that they were not under arrest, even though each individual's right to travel and leave as they pleased was impeded," the flyer read, in part.

Sheriff's officials have said that about 200 law enforcement officers, including federal agents, had surrounded the village, but haven't disclosed what evidence or materials have been taken. About 80 to 100 people were at the village at the time of the raid, the sheriff's department has said.

Since moving from New York to Putnam County in 1993, members of the group have clashed with local officials, mostly over zoning issues regarding the structures at the compound.

Joe Griner, an Eatonton resident of five years who was shopping in the town Sunday, said he wasn't surprised at the arrests and raid at the compound, given the group's history of run-ins with local law enforcement.

"It didn't surprise me a bit," he said. "Them and the law have battled quite a bit over the last few years. They've made national news several times."

Grand Jury Indicts Nuwaubian Leader

The Augusta Chronicle/May 16, 2002

Dwight "Malachi" York preyed on children younger than 10, forcing them to commit all manner of sex acts with himself and others, and in some cases, videotaping the acts, a sweeping 120-count indictment returned by a Putnam County grand jury alleges.

Mr. York, the 56-year-old leader of the quasi-religious Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, faces one count of rape, 74 counts of child molestation and 29 counts of aggravated child molestation involving five alleged victims, both male and female.

In addition, his common-law wife, Kathy Johnson, and Nuwaubian members Chandra Lampkin, Kadijah Merritt and Esther Cole, are charged with child molestation.

"It's a voluminous case," Putnam County District Attorney Fred Bright said. "We intent to prosecute it to the fullest extent under the law."

The indictment comes on the heels of Mr. York's arrest last week on four federal charges of transporting minors over state lines for purposes of sex. Mr. York remained in federal custody after being denied bail in U.S. Magistrate Court in Macon; Ms. Johnson was granted \$75,000 bond.

Sheriff Sills said his office first heard allegations of child molestation at the rural Nuwaubian compound in 1998. His investigators and the FBI spent the next four years gathering information, and a break in the case came last May when a victim came forward, he said.

"That brought the investigation into a new light," he said.

All the acts are alleged to have occurred at Mr. York's gated compound, which Sheriff Sills likened to a "warehouse situation," with subpar, unventilated living quarters containing "room after room" of bunk beds. He said as many as 50 children lived in the compound. Five were taken

into protective custody after last week's raid by federal agents and sheriff's officers.

The grand jury heard from four alleged victims Monday before returning the indictments. Mr. York is accused of molesting one victim as many as 30 times between 1995 and 2000, starting when the girl was younger than 14, according to the indictments. Another victim, a boy, is believed by authorities to have been molested at least 27 times, also starting in 1993 when he was younger than 14. Mr. Bright said the youngest victims were under the age of 10.

Mr. York had sex with adults in the presence of children, made children engage in sex acts with others and even enticed children into having sex with other minors, the 53-page indictment alleges.

Despite the allegations of Mr. York videotaping some of the acts, Sheriff Sills said he had no evidence Mr. York was in the business of distributing child pornography.

Mr. York has ties to Athens, where he owns a \$525,000 home off Timothy Road and where followers planned to open a bookstore on West Broad Street. A search of the home on Mansfield Court by FBI agents turned up some \$125,000 in cash, U.S. Attorney Maxwell Wood said.

Athens Probing Nuwaubian Leader

NewsChannel 11/May 19, 2002

Authorities are looking into charges that jailed United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors leader Dwight York allegedly molested a child at his mansion in Athens.

Putnam County investigators alerted officials to at least one possible female victim in the area, Athens-Clarke police confirmed this week.

"Our primary concern is for the potential young victims, and that they receive proper counseling and care," said Athens-Clarke County Assistant Police Chief Mark Wallace. "Of course, we'd make any (criminal) charges deemed appropriate."

The reclusive Brooklyn-born leader was seldom seen in Athens.

The Athens Banner-Herald reported Sunday that public records show that York was suspected of running a mail-order business from his home, and may have been housing more than 20 people.

Records also show that neighbors told police they thought outdoor religious services were being conducted at the property, and that they suspected the Nuwaubians of running a school there, the newspaper reported.

While investigators have no proof of York running any type of illegal business from his home in Athens, federal agents did seize \$125,000 in cash from his home during a search two weeks ago.

Around the same time, more than 100 officers raided the 476-acre Nuwaubian compound in Putnam County, seizing at least 30 guns.

York, who calls himself Malachi, faces four federal counts involving sexual exploitation of minors. The maximum penalty for each charge is 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

In addition to the federal charges, a Putnam County grand jury issued a 116-count indictment against York, his partner, Kathy Johnson, and three other members of the organization.

York has been charged with 74 counts of child molestation, 29 counts of aggravated child molestation and related charges, including one count of rape.

The Nuwaubians have clashed with Putnam County officials for years over building codes,

voter registration and the group's hiring of armed security guards.

The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors is a predominantly black group whose members live in a rural compound resembling an ancient Egyptian theme park, with huge pyramids and a large gate covered with hieroglyphics.

In some Nuwaubian literature, York has been referred to as the group's savior. The texts also say he is an extraterrestrial from the planet "Rizq."

Last week, a federal judge in Macon denied York bond.

In the 1960s, York served time in a New York prison for assault, resisting arrest and possession of a dangerous weapon.

Bond set for Nuwaubian woman

Union-Recorder/May 29, 2002
By Payton Towns III

Eatonton -- One of three Nuwaubian women charged with sexual molestation had her bond set Tuesday morning during a hearing in front of an Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Supreme Court judge.

Officials said Istiyar Cole remained in the Putnam County Jail on Tuesday afternoon after her bond was set at \$2,500 by Chief Judge William A. Prior Jr. Cole was indicted on one count of child molestation and was arrested May 16.

Kadijah Merritt, charged with two counts of aggravated child molestation and two counts of child molestation, and Chandra Lampkin, charged with three counts of aggravated child

molestation and two counts of child molestation, were denied bond, officials said.

Merritt and Lampkin were arrested around 3 p.m. May 21 when they turned themselves in at the Putnam County Sheriff's Office. Both women, along with Cole, were indicted May 13 by a Putnam County grand jury.

Dwight D. York, known as Malaki Z. York, and Kathy Johnson were also indicted on charges by the grand jury. York was indicted on 116 counts of child molestation and aggravated child molestation and other sexual offense for molesting five victims - young girls and boys - from 1993 to 2001 at the Nuwaubian compound in Putnam County.

York was indicted on 74 counts of child molestation, 29 counts of aggravated child molestation, five counts of enticing a child for indecent purposes, four counts of statutory rape, two counts of sexual exploitation of a minor, one count of rape and one count of influencing a witness.

Johnson was indicted on four counts of child molestation and one count of aggravated child molestation.

York and Johnson are being held in federal custody. York was denied bond in federal court May 14, but Johnson received a \$75,000 bond, which has yet to be posted. As soon or if she does pay bond, Johnson will be brought to the Putnam County Sheriff's Office, said Sheriff Howard Sills.

The five - York, Johnson and the three women - are facing, if convicted, 30 years on each count of aggravated child molestation and 20 years on each count of child molestation. The four females are charged with participating with York in the sexual activity at the time of the occurrences.

Sect leader promised salvation via sex, teen says

Atlanta Journal-Constitution/June 2, 2002

By Bill Osinski

Orlando -- It began, the girl said, when the man they all called "the lamb" told her that submitting to his sexual desires was her ticket to heaven.

She was 12; he was 50 or 51.

Nuwaubian leader Dwight York started summoning her to do cleaning chores in his home on the sect's farm in Putnam county, she said.

Soon after that, the encounters with York at the farm where her mother had brought her to live turned sexual, she said. It would continue for about the next 2 1/2 years -- sometimes every night -- and she obeyed, she said.

Sometimes, other adults and children were present or participating with York in the sex acts, she said.

"If you do this, you'll go to heaven, you'll be saved," she said York told her during their encounters.

"I knew it was wrong from the get-go," she said.

Now 17, the girl has broken free of the farm and York's influence.

She has told her story, first to her father and then to a Putnam County grand jury that recently indicted York, now 56, on 116 counts related to molesting underage girls and boys. Those charges were brought shortly after York's arrest May 8 on federal charges of transporting

children across state lines for illegal sexual activity. The girl is named as a victim in 13 counts of the state indictment and as a witness in four others.

The girl and her father spoke with the Journal-Constitution at their home in Orlando.

Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills, who spearheaded the four-year investigation that led to York's arrest, said he has not personally interviewed the girl or others who testified before the state grand jury. But he said he believes they are credible witnesses.

"I think the indictment speaks for itself," Sills said. "Could all these people be lying? Yes. But could a spaceship land tomorrow in the back of the jail? In the same way, yes."

The sheriff said he has "never been involved in a child molestation case where so many people have come forward."

During a recent hearing at which York was denied bond, an FBI agent testified that the government has identified 35 people allegedly molested by York as children. The victims were as young as four, the agent testified.

'The story is too crazy

The 17-year-old girl is on the honor roll in her high school and plans to go to college. She can speak dry-eyed and matter-of-factly about her experience inside the Nuwaubian group, even laughing at times at what she sees now as a bizarre but difficult experience in the cultlike group.

Ed Garland, York's defense attorney, declined to comment for this story. He has previously suggested that the witnesses against York may have been coached by either their relatives or by police.

The girl denied that she has received any form of coaching.

Nuwaubians in the News

"No one would know how to coach me," she said. "The story is too crazy."

Regardless of what happens in court, the girl's family has been shattered and divided by their associations with York's groups.

The girl's mother and one of her older sisters remain loyal to York; the mother continues to live on the 400-acre Putnam County farm that is the base for York's group, the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

York and 100 to 200 of his followers came to Georgia in 1993 from Brooklyn, N.Y., where they had formed a group called Ansaru Allah Community.

In New York, the group was Muslim-oriented in ideology, costume and religious practices; while in Georgia, they have adopted practice and garb from ancient Egypt and have decorated their farm with Egyptian-style pyramids, obelisks and statues.

York is referred to as the "master teacher" and "the lamb." In some of the group's literature, York claims to be a godlike being from a planet he calls Rizq.

The girl's family's entanglement with York goes back to the early 1970s in Trinidad. York went there to establish a branch of his group, which was then based in Brooklyn, N.Y., and called Ansaru Allah Community, the father said.

He said York's brand of black historical consciousness mixed with observance of Islamic religious practices appealed to him, and he became affiliated with the group, which did not practice communal living in Trinidad, as it did in Brooklyn.

The father married a woman who had become pregnant by York. They raised that child, a daughter, and had six children of their own, including the 17-year-old, he said.

In the early 1980s, his wife took the eldest daughter to Brooklyn to meet York -- her

biological father, who had never supported her, he said. They decided to stay, his wife becoming one of York's wives, he said.

The father said he and his children followed the woman to the Ansaru Allah Community, but stayed only a few months. "I couldn't even talk to her," he said about his wife.

Some of the apartments in the complex of apartment houses on Bushwick Avenue were rat infested, and others had no electricity and open holes in the floors, the father said.

The men and women lived in separate buildings, with the women staying in the community and doing York's office work, while the men were sent out to the streets of New York to peddle things like incense and York's books and pamphlets, he said.

He said he worked and lived in the New York area and kept the children with him. His wife would stay with the family for periods of time, but would also return to Ansaru Allah.

The couple separated for good in the early 1990s, with the wife taking their four daughters back with her to York -- who at that time spent most of his time at his rural estate in Sullivan County, New York. The couple's two sons were grown by this time.

In 1994, the mother and the couple's two youngest daughters went to the farm in Putnam County; the older two daughters had left on their own. By this time, York had changed the name of the group to the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors; most of the Islamic practices and ideology were dropped. And he promised to lead a select group of his followers to a form of extragalactic salvation, the father said.

The girl, who is the fifth of six children, said the living conditions for her and the other children were "very bad."

Their doublewide trailer had no air-conditioning, broken windows and cracked plywood floors, she said. Their food consisted mostly of staples,

Nuwaubians in the News

such as oatmeal, rice, beans, carrots and cabbage, she said.

When she was about 12, she and some other girls her age started being called to York's house on the farm. She was told she was to help keep house for York, she said.

Some of the women in the group started to ask her sexually explicit questions, such as, "Have you ever been with a boy?" she said. They told her about some of the sexual things that York might want her to do, she said.

After York would have sex with her, he would order her not to tell anyone, especially her mother, about what he did with her, she said.

"He said if I told her, she would be punished," the girl said.

So the girl kept her meetings with York a secret. She said she knew she wanted to leave, but she also knew she'd have to be older before she could manage to find her way out.

In the meantime, she worked in York's office, sometimes preparing stories for the Nuwaubian newspaper. One night in 1999, she sneaked back into York's office and called her father in New York asking him to come to Georgia to get her.

"She said something bad had happened to her, but she wouldn't say what," the father said.

The next day, the father and two of the girl's older siblings arrived at the Nuwaubian compound. They were allowed past the security gate because the guard didn't recognize them, he said. His daughter had been watching for them and made a run for the car.

Her mother saw her leaving and called to her.

She assured her mother that she wanted to leave, and she did, taking nothing but the clothes she was wearing. A few months later, the father sent a plane ticket for the youngest daughter, and she rejoined him in New York.

He divorced his wife not long after getting his daughters back, and his ex-wife remains on the Nuwaubian compound, as far as he knows. He said he still cannot understand why his wife, an educated woman, remains loyal to York.

After his daughter rejoined him, she was moody, rebellious and reluctant to discuss any details of her life in the Nuwaubian community, he said.

A desire to tell the public

But about a year ago, he overheard her and her younger sister talking about how York had molested her. He said he was outraged and shocked, but he was able to persuade his daughter to tell the full story.

"It was like his spell over her was broken," he said.

He called the police in Florida, who told him he would have to report the crime to Georgia authorities.

Within a day or two, he took his daughter to FBI offices in Orlando to be interviewed by the agents working on the York investigation.

The father said he wants the justice system to deal fairly but harshly with York. He agreed to be interviewed and to allow his daughter to be interviewed for this story, he said, because he wants people to know how his family was damaged.

"York has no respect for humanity. Somebody had to stand up to him," the father said. "And I had to stand up for my daughter."

The father said he has contacted an attorney in Georgia for the purpose of filing civil litigation against York.

He added that although his daughter has not spoken to him about the details of her experiences with York, he is tormented by visions of her screaming, all to no avail.

"All the time my daughter was screaming, there was no one to help her," he said. "For every scream my daughter screamed, he should spend 10 years in jail."

Nuwabian leader sued for \$1 billion over sex abuse charges

Athens Banner-Herald/July 2, 2002
By Stephen Gurr

A Florida man has filed a lawsuit against jailed religious sect leader Dwight York in Athens federal court, accusing the one-time Athens resident of molesting the plaintiff's daughter when she was 11 years old.

The complaint, filed in U.S. District Court June 24, seeks punitive damages of \$1 billion. The name of the plaintiff in the suit is being withheld by this newspaper because of his relation to the alleged victim, a minor.

The suit claims that the victim and her mother, a member of York's quasi-religious United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, moved into York's Putnam County compound in 1993. At the age of 11, the suit alleges, the girl was told by a member of York's "inner circle" that something "wonderful" was going to happen to her, and that it would have "deep significance for her spiritual development."

York then showed the girl a pornographic movie and shortly afterward had sex with her, the suit alleges.

"He had (the girl) observe defendant York sexually abuse other children in a like manner, all for the purpose of gratifying his wicked,

depraved, and corrupt sexual appetite," the suit claims.

"This pattern of activity began at the compound in Putnam County and continued in Athens-Clarke County after York began to reside in Athens-Clarke County in 1998," the suit claims.

The victim named in the complaint is also listed as a victim in a 116-count criminal indictment against York on charges of child molestation and other related crimes.

The indictment was returned by a Putnam County grand jury three months ago and York remains in federal custody on charges of transporting minors across state lines for the purpose of sex.

York's attorney, Ed Garland, was unavailable for comment Monday. Garland has previously said his client was "completely, totally and absolutely innocent of these charges."

Athens attorney John Barrow, representing the plaintiff, declined to comment on the suit.

Athens-Clarke Police looked into the possibility that York may have molested children in his sprawling Mansfield Court mansion, which he purchased in 1999 for \$557,000. But as of this week, police said, interviews with potential victims have turned up no indications of criminal activities at the mansion.

Putnam County investigators and officials with the state Division of Family and Children Services interviewed a cult member's daughter who lives in Athens, but "no criminal charges have been filed to date as a result of that interview," Athens-Clarke County Assistant Police Chief Mark Wallace said Monday.

The lawsuit says the molestations of the girl named in the complaint continued for six years, until she called her father in 1999 and told him she wanted to go home. In March 2002, she confided in family members about the abuses and the father contacted authorities, the suit claims.

Man sues sect leader, alleging child abuse

Augusta Chronicle/July 3, 2002
By Stephen Gurr

Athens, Ga. -- A Florida man has filed a lawsuit against jailed religious sect leader Dwight York in northeast Georgia federal court, accusing the one-time Athens resident of molesting the plaintiff's daughter when she was 11 years old.

The complaint, filed in U.S. District Court on June 24, seeks punitive damages of \$1 billion. The name of the plaintiff in the suit is being withheld because of his relation to the alleged victim, a minor.

The suit alleges that the girl and her mother, a member of Mr. York's quasi-religious United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, moved into Mr. York's Putnam County compound in 1993. At the age of 11, the suit alleges, the girl was told by a member of Mr. York's "inner circle" that something "wonderful" was going to happen to her, and that it would have "deep significance for her spiritual development."

Mr. York then showed the girl a pornographic movie and shortly afterward had sex with her, the suit alleges.

"He had (the girl) observe defendant York sexually abuse other children in a like manner, all for the purpose of gratifying his wicked, depraved, and corrupt sexual appetite," the suit says.

"This pattern of activity began at the compound in Putnam County and continued in Athens-Clarke County after York began to reside in Athens-Clarke County in 1998."

The victim named in the complaint is also listed as a victim in a 116-count criminal indictment against Mr. York on charges of child molestation and related crimes.

The indictment was returned by a Putnam County grand jury three months ago, and Mr. York remains in federal custody on charges of transporting minors across state lines for the purpose of sex.

Mr. York's attorney, Ed Garland, of Atlanta, could not be found for comment, but has said that his client is "completely, totally and absolutely innocent of these charges."

Athens attorney John Barrow, representing the plaintiff, would not comment on the suit.

Athens-Clarke Police looked into the possibility that Mr. York might have molested children in his sprawling Athens mansion. As of this week, police said, interviews with potential victims have turned up no indications of criminal activities at the mansion.

Putnam again nixes Nuwaubian building permit

Agent vows to sue to get permit for facility known as Rameses

Macon Telegraph/July 17, 2002
By Rob Peecher

Eatonton -- The five-year struggle by the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors to obtain a building permit appears headed back to court after the County Commission voted Tuesday to uphold the county engineer's decision to revoke a permit for the building. Now calling the building a "private hunting lodge," Al Woodall, an agent for the property owners of the Nuwaubian village said he "most definitely" will file a lawsuit against the county to force it to grant a permit for the building known as Rameses.

During a commission hearing Tuesday, Woodall discussed the recent history of the building. He said he has worked in good faith with the county attorney, the county's engineer and one of the commissioners to bring the building into compliance with county codes.

After Nuwaubians received a permit for the building in April, Woodall said county engineer Robby Howell revoked the permit and put a stop-work order on the building in May.

Howell said the permit was revoked because the use proposed for the building - a hunting lodge - is not allowed in an agricultural district under the county's zoning laws. Woodall has also submitted permit applications stating the intended use as a fellowship hall, but the county rejected that, too.

Rameses was originally issued a permit as a 50-by-100-foot storage building in 1997, and it has been at the heart of the zoning and building permit battle between the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors and the county for five years.

In 1998, Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills successfully sued to prevent the Nuwaubians from using the building after seeing TV news reports showing the building was being used as a nightclub. Though its permit allowed for no plumbing and limited electricity, the building was constructed with public bathroom facilities and a kitchen and was larger than the 50-by-100-foot permitted size. The building also had extensive wiring.

Howell said Tuesday that among the reasons prompting him to revoke the permit was that the plans submitted in the latest permit application are not consistent with a hunting lodge.

When asked during a planning and zoning commission hearing last month about whether ammunition would be stored in the hunting lodge, Woodall replied, "The owners see a broad scope of hunting. Hunting doesn't always necessarily mean that you have to kill. Hunting is to hunt. And anything associated with wildlife and nature also falls up under hunting, as well."

Following the commission's denial of the appeal Tuesday, Woodall said the Nuwaubians are religious people and will use the building "for whatever is allowed" under county zoning ordinances.

The Nuwaubians are a primarily African-American segregationist group with a 476-acre village at 404 Shady Dale Road. The group has been in Putnam County for about 10 years and has had numerous legal problems with the county about building and zoning issues for the past five years.

Nuwaubian leader Malachi York was arrested by the Putnam County Sheriff's Office and the FBI in May. He is being held in federal custody without possibility of bond and faces four counts of transporting minors across state lines for the purpose of having sex with them. York faces an additional 116 state counts in Putnam County, mostly on charges of child molestation.

Nuwaubian denied bond in Putnam County court

**Macon Telegraph/August 24, 2002
By Rob Peecher**

Eatonton -- Kathy Johnson, the woman accused with Nuwaubian leader Malachi York of numerous counts of child molestation, was denied bond Friday in Putnam County Superior Court.

During the five-hour bond hearing, several members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a black separatist group with a 476-acre village in Putnam County, testified about Johnson's character. Among them were two medical doctors associated with the group, a Macon police officer and a Monticello police officer.

A Putnam County grand jury named Johnson, 33, and three other women in a 116-count indictment accusing them of molesting children with York. Followers refer to Johnson as York's "main wife."

She also is indicted with York on federal charges of transporting minors across state lines for the purpose of having sex with them.

Johnson is in federal custody. A federal magistrate judge has set a \$75,000 bond for her release. Attorney Brian Steele of Atlanta told Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge William Prior she could make the federal bond but wanted to know first if bond would be set in the state case.

District Attorney Fred Bright opposed bond and called Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills and Putnam sheriff's detective Tracey Bowen to testify about the charges against Johnson. Bowen testified some of the alleged victims in the case have tested positive for sexually transmitted diseases, and at least three children - two girls and a boy - allege that Johnson participated with York in the sexual abuse against them.

Indictments allege more than 100 criminal acts

**Macon Telegraph/September 1, 2002
By Rob Peecher**

Prior to Malachi York's May 8 arrest in Milledgeville, a federal grand jury had indicted him and Kathy Johnson for taking children across state lines for the purpose of having sex with them.

The four-count federal indictment accused both York, 57, and Johnson, 33, of moving children

from the Sullivan County, N.Y., camp to the compound in Putnam County in March 1993 for the purpose of having sex. Another count accuses York of the same thing in April 1993.

The third and fourth counts charge York with taking children from Georgia to Orlando, Fla., in the spring of 1996 for the purpose of having sex with them. According to testimony given by a federal agent during York's bond hearing, York took the children to Disney World.

Within a week of the arrests, a Putnam County grand jury indicted York on 74 counts of child molestation, 29 counts of aggravated child molestation, four counts of statutory rape, one count of rape, two counts of sexual exploitation of a minor, one count of influencing a witness and five counts of enticing a child for indecent purposes.

The state's 116-count indictment also charges Johnson with four counts of child molestation and one count of aggravated child molestation. Three other women also were charged: Istyir Cole, with one count of child molestation; and Chandra Lampkin and Kadajah Merritt, each with three counts of child molestation and two counts of aggravated child molestation.

York was denied bond by a federal magistrate and remains in federal custody awaiting trial. Johnson was given \$75,000 bond by a federal magistrate but denied bond by a Superior Court judge on the state charges. She remains in federal custody. Cole has been released on \$25,000 bond, and Lampkin and Merritt are both being held without bond in the Putnam County jail.

When sheriff's deputies and federal agents executed search warrants at the Nuwaubian village the day of York's arrest, they took five children into protective custody. All but one of those children remain in protective custody. The other child was released to a relative not affiliated with York's group.

Four of the five children have tested positive for a sexually transmitted disease.

York has not been charged with any crimes relating to those five children.

Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit District Attorney Fred Bright said a trial date has not been set for York and the women, but he anticipates a jury trial on the state charges sometime in January. York's attorneys have asked that the trial be moved from Putnam County. Bright said he will not oppose a change of venue.

York's accusers describe years of sexual abuse

Nuwaubian leader promised 'ritual' would ensure eternal life, teen says

**Macon Telegraph/September 1, 2002
By Rob Peecher**

Eatonton -- He says he'll never forget the day the sexual abuse began. It was nine years ago, on his seventh birthday.

He was living in upstate New York at a camp run by Malachi York, leader of a religious sect now called the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors. He says York and a woman named Chandra Lampkin showed him a cartoon porn video, and Lampkin touched the boy's private parts. York was naked from the waist down.

The boy's older sister, now 18, claims York began abusing her when she was 8. York told her that having sex with him was a religious ritual, she says, a "great secret" that she should never reveal.

"If we do that, we would go to heaven with the angels and we would never die," she says York told her.

The brother and sister account for more than half of the 116 sexual child abuse charges in a state indictment issued May 14 against York, Lampkin and other members of the group. York also faces federal charges in the case.

The two children and their mother joined York's group in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1986, when it was called the Ansaru Allah Community, and followed York to Georgia in 1993. The mother thought she was joining a disciplined Islamic sect that would protect her kids from drugs and gangs. She says she knew nothing about the sexual abuse until late 2000.

"I had no idea," she says. "My main objective of going there was for the safety of my children, not knowing I'm walking them into the lion's den of a pedophiler. That never crossed my mind."

These and other former members of the Nuwaubian sect have painted a detailed and bizarre picture of life inside the group. Among their allegations:

"The group separated children from their parents, allowing visits only once a week. Children slept on floors and ate little, at times crammed 30 to a trailer. They were denied schooling. They were beaten, sometimes with boards, for small infractions.

"Despite his followers' living conditions, York lived in luxury just a few feet away. One of his houses had an indoor swimming pool and a recording studio.

"The group's activities generated large amounts of cash. When York was arrested, he was carrying \$10,000, and investigators found another \$400,000 at the group's properties in Athens and Putnam County. The annual Savior's Day festival, a weeklong celebration of York's birthday, brought in \$500,000, according to one of his sons.

"York controlled the sexual behavior of the group's members, deciding when husbands and wives could have sex. York had sex with anyone he wanted, whenever he wanted to, former

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followers say. Investigators say he appears to have at least 100 offspring.

York has pleaded not guilty to the federal charges and has not been arraigned on the state charges. His lawyer, Ed Garland of Atlanta, declined comment, saying he still is investigating the case.

York's supporters, among them state Rep. Tyrone Brooks, D-Atlanta, have claimed the allegations are false, accusing law enforcement officials of targeting York because of his race and beliefs.

A year before York's arrest, one of his children, an adult son, was instrumental in leading authorities to his father's alleged victims. Once a member of the group, the son broke away and now works to help other York followers get out of the group.

"He is not a savior," his son says. "The only savior's day is the day you walk out of that place. That's the only day you save yourself."

York gets his start

Saadik Redd became one of York's followers in 1970. Redd had just converted to Islam. York was launching a career as a spiritual leader by forming the Nubian Islamic Hebrews in Brooklyn.

Redd says he rapidly gained York's trust. For eight years he served as York's driver. He was there as the group flourished in Brooklyn's Bushwick Avenue neighborhood.

York's group has gone through frequent incarnations. He changed its name to the Ansaru Allah Community, but it still centered on Islam. Redd traveled with York to Trinidad to establish a branch of the group, and in 1978, Redd set up branches in Baltimore and Washington.

Redd was one of York's most ardent believers, even though he claims he overheard York planning to dupe his followers with false theology.

"The ultimate success of a con man is to make the person who's being conned make excuses for the con man," Redd says. "If I can get you to deny reality, then I have in fact controlled your mind."

By the late 1970s, Redd says, he grew frustrated with York and his teachings. In 1981, he left the group when his brother convinced him that York was not teaching "true Islam."

York had between 2,000 and 3,000 followers in the 1970s, according to Redd. The group occupied as many as 30 buildings in the Bushwick Avenue neighborhood. York had a recording studio, and Redd says York used his image to attract followers.

"He dressed slick. The whole image thing was going for him. So a lot of the street people looked up to him. And a lot of the up-and-coming rappers looked up to him because he had a musical studio," Redd says.

Redd sometimes lived in the "barracks" with other men. It was like living in an abandoned house - no heat, no hot water, no beds. More often he lived in York's house, where conditions were "totally opposite from how the people lived," Redd says.

He says the group's only real purpose was to feed its leader's ego. York often bragged about his sexual conquests, he says.

"Whatever he wants, he gets, literally," Redd says. "He wants control. He just wants to dominate. He would meet a person and their wife, and sleep with their wife just to show that he had control over you."

Several years after he left the group, Redd says, he cooperated with the FBI in New York and provided information about alleged criminal activity within the group.

Redd's name appears in a 1993 FBI report as having traveled with York to Trinidad. The report also cites unnamed former members of the group as informants who accuse York's

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followers of crimes such as arson, bank robbery, weapons stockpiling and murder.

The report recommends a "full domestic security/terrorism investigation" of the group, but that doesn't appear to have happened. The report was issued around the time York and his followers moved to Georgia. It was forwarded to the FBI Atlanta office, where agents monitored York for a short time after the move, according to Georgia Bureau of Investigation documents.

'Just a messed up life'

Two years before Redd left the group, in 1979, a 9-year-old girl and her mother moved into its Brooklyn neighborhood.

The girl is now 32, and though she says she was never sexually abused, she describes her life in York's sect as brutal and impoverished. The woman asked not to be identified, saying she fears for her safety.

"I was taken away from my mother," she says. "She had nothing to do with us. We could only see our parents on Fridays because Fridays was the day we'd do a special prayer."

For a brief period, she says, government officials forced York to put all of the children into school, but other than that she never attended public school after joining the group. She went to what was called "Muslim class" and was taught some Arabic.

Children lived together according to age and gender.

As punishment, the girls were sometimes beaten on their hands and feet with lumber - what she described as "thick wood, like when you're building a building."

For nine years she never slept on a bed.

"We slept on floors. We had to eat with our hands. We ate what (York) wanted us to eat. ... It's just a messed up life he caused me to go through."

She says she was among a group of girls raised as virgins who were to marry men from the Sudan. But she was thrown out of the group when she turned 18, she says, because York accused her of conspiring to leave. Fourteen years later, she has been unable to straighten out her life.

"What's so bad about it is that when I was put out in this world, as (York) says, it's like I was lost," the woman says. "I didn't know the reality of this world because we was always taken care of. We didn't have to cook. Our clothes was made for us. The only thing we was taught is how to take care of family, how to take care of your husband and how to take care of babies.

The men went out peddling everyday, she says, selling oils, trinkets and York's literature on the street. She believes that was how York made most of his money.

She says York rewarded the men who brought in the most money by allowing them to have sex with their wives. But York had sex, or as the woman called it, "have intimate," with whomever he chose.

She says it took her a long time to stop believing that York was an angel, and she was left with no religious beliefs.

"I'm mad that he didn't teach us ... nothing about getting a job and going to school. ... If we wanted to go to school, we got put out (of the group). We couldn't go to school out here (away from York's community). He said it was the devil's school."

She says her mother and siblings remain in the group. She sought help at a mental hospital in New Jersey after she was kicked out. The people there felt sorry for her, she says, but offered no help.

"I struggle every day and just shake my head. He messed me up."

Camp Jazzir Abba

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York's organization had tentacles reaching out to dozens of U.S. cities.

Redd helped establish communities in Baltimore and Washington and the first overseas community in Trinidad. At least one community was formed in England. York's headquarters remained in Brooklyn until about 1983, when York bought an 81-acre camp just outside the town of Liberty in Sullivan County, N.Y.

Every summer, Sullivan County's population grows from about 70,000 to as much as 300,000 as ethnic and religious groups from New York City retreat to the countryside. But for some local officials and neighbors, York's group stood out from other camps in the area.

"Whenever you went there, you were greeted with armed people at the gate and guard dogs," says Pam Winters, the building inspector in Liberty. "We were glad to see them go."

Winters says there were frequent building code and land-use violations at the camp, known as Camp Jazzir Abba. In many respects the problems county officials in New York experienced with York's group mirror problems Putnam County officials have run into.

Winters said the town of Liberty had to take the Ansaru Allah Community to court to force the group to move unpermitted homes off the property.

At the camp were roughly a half-dozen bungalows and an enormous house that York's followers built around a double-wide trailer. The house contained an indoor swimming pool and a recording studio. It is now gutted and falling in.

Patrick Burns, who lives within a mile of the rural camp, says he told his wife to change her jogging habits after seeing armed guards patrolling the camp's perimeter.

"Everybody was paranoid," Burns says.

York and his followers abandoned Camp Jazzir Abba in 1993 when they moved to Georgia. Five

years later, Sullivan County took the property because York and a co-owner failed to pay taxes for several years.

When the group moved south, the Ansaru Allah Community became the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

When the trouble with building codes began in Putnam County, York moved to an apartment in Athens, then bought a house in an upscale neighborhood off Timothy Road. York's followers, who in Putnam County live in crowded trailers, refer to the house as "the mansion."

In New York, the group was perceived by outsiders to be an Islamic sect. In Georgia, the group's literature claimed that York was from another planet.

Brother, sister speak out

The brother and sister who claim York molested them joined the group with their older sister and mother in October 1986. The boy was almost a year old, and his sister was 2. They are now 16 and 18.

The mother says her daughters were separated and housed with other girls their ages, but initially her son lived with her. She cared for girls of different ages at first. Then she did office work, first translating York's books into Spanish and then working on the group's mail-order marketing. She says she was never paid for any of these jobs.

She knew her children's living conditions were poor, that they slept on floors and ate inadequate meals. But she says she expected to make sacrifices before things got better.

The family moved to Putnam County in 1993. Living conditions in the village were no better than in New York.

"(York) lived in a nice house, and everybody else, they lived in broken down homes," says the sister who is now 18 and named in the

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indictment as one of York's victims. "They had a girls' house. That's where all the girls lived. The sink was falling through the floor. We had holes all over the floor, and one time some girl fell through the shower."

In the three-bedroom double-wide trailer where she lived, she says, there were as many as 30 girls and one or two adult women.

Her brother lived in a barn with male members of the group.

The children say they worked constantly, painting or building the pyramids and other Egyptian-style structures on the Nuwaubian compound. The 18-year-old describes punishments similar to those experienced by the woman who grew up with the group in Brooklyn.

"Say somebody broke a vase or something and one of the girls don't want to fess up and say they did it," she says. "So everybody in the whole group would get a beating from the lady who was watching us. Sometimes they'd beat you on the hand, sometimes they beat you on the feet with a ruler or a hairbrush, a wooden hairbrush. As you get older, they started beating you with boards and extension cords."

She says living conditions always grew worse in early summer when the Nuwaubians prepared for Savior's Day.

"That's the time we was basically scraping for food, because they would cut down our food budget because (York) was always trying to get money to pay for the books so he could sell them on Savior's Day. So we basically would be eating bread and water," she says.

The brother and sister, two of the five victims named in the indictment, say the sexual abuse started just before the move to Georgia and continued about once a week for six years. The indictment accuses York of having sex with victims, having sex with children or adults in the victims' presence, and watching while the victims had sex with each other or adults.

The brother and sister say their abuse ended about the time York moved to Athens in 1999.

Their mother moved to Athens with York. She says she has two younger daughters, both fathered by York.

By the time York moved back to Putnam County within the past year, the brother and sister had left the group.

In late 2000, the oldest daughter, who is now 27, was kicked out of the group. The now-18-year-old daughter saw her sister's removal as her chance to escape. When her sister came to the Putnam County farm to retrieve some personal items, the younger girl asked her sister to come back for her.

"I told her a spot to come pick me up at, a spot (on the road) up near the woods," the 18-year-old recalls.

She packed her belongings in trash bags, pretended to take out the trash and escaped when her sister drove in front of the Nuwaubian compound.

Their mother says she knew nothing about the sexual abuse until her daughters escaped and told her. She says she felt betrayed by York.

York's son rebels

Also referred to as "family day," Savior's Day generated large amounts of money for York, authorities say. York's son, who led authorities to his father, says the event brought York about \$500,000 a year.

Savior's Day typically lasted from four days to a week and, at its height in 1999, drew an estimated 4,000 people from around the world.

Many of those 4,000 were family members on the outside, paying \$50 entry fees to see loved ones who were members of the group, says York's son, who spoke on condition of anonymity, citing his fear of retaliation.

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Relatives also were charged for food, beds, campground space and numerous other things. During the festival, York also sold incense, oils and books.

"If you pay to get into the function, you're allowed to see your family members," York's son says. "So that's kind of why he had such a huge turnout all those years, was because people were paying ... not to see him or care about what he said, but the majority of people were paying to see family members. That's why this guy was making half a million dollars in just three or four days."

York's son says he saw a videotape of York having sex with a child a number of years ago, but waited before going to authorities. He knew his father had government connections and feared he might be able to quash any investigation.

He says he decided to go to Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills after seeing some Nuwaubian-produced pamphlets about the sheriff. If the Nuwaubians hated Sills as much as the fliers suggested, the son says, he believed he could trust the sheriff. Sills brought in the FBI.

A year before York's arrest, the son was introducing Sills and federal agents to children later named in the indictment. Others also claimed they had been molested by York, but the cases were so old that the statute of limitations had expired, according to law enforcement sources.

York's son is involved in what he calls a kind of underground railroad to help former members get out of the group and straighten out their lives. He has an e-mail account so members of the group who want out can write him for help.

Since York's arrest some followers have left the group, but many remain. Guards still are posted at the front gate of the village, and York's followers are often seen on the property and out in the community.

York's son says those who remain loyal to York are scared because they have been in the group for so long.

That was true for the mother of the 16- and 18-year-old who say York molested them. Even after hearing her children's accusations, the mother says, she was uncertain of what to do. She had not had a job in 14 years. She had no money, no car, no personal belongings other than some clothes.

She left the group, with her son and two youngest daughters, about a week after learning about the allegations.

The mother says she still has difficulty reconciling the man she believed in for 14 years with the man she now believes molested her children.

"I still can say I have respect for York as a grand master teacher," she says.

Since leaving the group, the 18-year-old has obtained her GED and is now attending college. Her brother, who like his sister never attended school, is now enrolled in high school.

The sister says she believes many of York's loyal followers know that her allegations are true but refuse to admit it.

"They used to see him with children all the time. Children spend the night at his house, and (the followers) just want to be blind and not even see that it really happened. I think they're trying to be blind...."

"They're just trying to stick up for him because they wasted their whole life.... There's people 30 to 50 years old, and what are they going to do now?"

Bars not thwarting York's progress

**Athens Banner-Herald/September
16, 2002**

By Stephen Gurr

Being in federal custody for the past four months hasn't kept religious sect leader Dwight "Malachi" York from going forward with plans to open a book store on West Broad Street.

Last week Athens-Clarke County officials issued a standard business occupation tax certificate in York's name, or rather his alias of Malachi Z. York. The sometimes-resident of Athens has been jailed in the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary awaiting trial since his arrest in May on federal charges of transporting minors across state lines for the purpose of sex. York, 56, is also facing state charges after a Putnam County grand jury indicted York on 120 counts of child molestation and related charges.

Progress at the building at the corner of West Broad and South Church streets has gone at a glacial pace since it was deeded to York for \$385,000 in March 2000. Workers transformed the former Ideal Amusements building into a quasi-Moorish structure complete with Egyptian hieroglyphics carved into the facade, and after months of inactivity, workers have been seen almost daily loading boxes, sometimes from a transfer truck.

Last week county officials received a registration form signed by York for the mandatory business occupation tax, Athens-Clarke Finance Director John Culpepper said.

"Wherever he was when he signed it, I don't know," Culpepper said.

Culpepper stressed that a business occupation tax certificate does not amount to a business license. County officials have little regulatory powers over the business except to make sure

the stated business complies with zoning regulations.

The business at 815 W. Broad St. has been registered as "Holy Tabernacle Store, Malachi Z. York, owner." In the late 1990s York owned a store by the same name in Savannah, which is apparently no longer in business.

A call to the number listed in the Athens-Clarke documents as the business phone resulted in a fax dial tone.

An employee answering the telephone at All Eyes On Egypt, another York-founded store near Georgia Square Mall, said she couldn't comment on the West Broad Street store. She referred inquiries to Cheryl Lampkin, who was unavailable for comment Friday. York's followers, known collectively as Nuwaubians, have generally declined to talk to the news media, particularly since their leader was arrested.

While York has paid his business occupation tax, the new store is far from being ready for business, according to building inspection officials.

"They don't have a certificate of occupancy," said Ken Hix, Athens-Clarke director of building inspections and permits. There have been no interior inspections of electrical wiring and plumbing, and the last exterior inspection was in May, he said.

"I haven't had contact with anyone over there in several months," Hix said.

According to public records, for a time York and his partner Kathy Johnson operated a thriving mail-order business from his mansion on Mansfield Court, flouting county zoning ordinances. After several neighbors complained, inspectors toured the area and found more than a dozen women working at computers in the house. The activity eventually ceased.

After York's arrest, federal agents served a search warrant at the house and seized \$125,000 in cash, authorities said.

A federal trial date has not been set for York, who was denied bond, U.S. Attorney's office spokeswoman Pam Lightsey said this week. U.S. District Court Judge Hugh Lawson's next term of court is in November.

York also faces a \$1 billion civil suit filed by the father of one of the alleged victims.

Putnam grand jury reindicts top Nuwaubian

**Atlanta Journal-
Constitution/October 4, 2002
By Bill Osinski**

Eatonton --- The state has expanded what is already believed to be Georgia's --- and perhaps the nation's --- largest child molestation case by reindicting Nuwaubian leader Dwight York. The Putnam County grand jury handed down a 208-count indictment Thursday, nearly doubling the number of crimes alleged in its previous indictment of York in May. York is named in 197 of the counts.

Eight new alleged victims were identified by the state for the new indictment.

"This has been the most voluminous case, in terms of number of counts, number of victims, and the sheer scope of the investigation that I've ever been associated with," said District Attorney Fred Bright, the lead prosecutor in the case. "It becomes mind-boggling after a while."

As with the earlier charges, almost all of the counts are child molestation or aggravated child

molestation, a crime in which force or violence is alleged.

Bright said the second indictment was necessary in order to ensure that the state's case is as complete as legally possible.

"I want the trial jury to hear the whole scope of the child molestation that happened here in Putnam County," Bright said.

Defense attorneys have filed a motion for a change of venue for the trial, and Bright said he will not oppose it.

York, 57, moved with 100 or so of his followers to a 400-acre rural property in Putnam County in 1993 from Brooklyn, N.Y., where the group was a Muslim-oriented organization called Ansaru Allah Community.

Once in Georgia, the group went through several name and identity changes before York settled on the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

A joint federal-local investigation began after police received anonymous tips that York was molesting children in the group, culminating in his arrest in May and a raid on the Nuwaubian property by about 300 law enforcement officers.

York has also been indicted in federal court and charged with four counts of transporting children across state lines for the purposes of illegal sexual activity. He was denied bail on those charges and he remains in federal custody.

Charges Facing Defendants

Macon Telegraph/October 26, 2002
By Rob Peecher

Nuwaubian leader Malachi York and the woman his followers refer to as his "main wife" were arrested on federal warrants May 8 just before sheriff's deputies and agents with the FBI raided the Nuwaubian village. Within a week, York, Kathy Johnson and the other defendants were indicted in a 116-count state indictment alleging child sex crimes. Earlier this month, York and the other defendants were re-indicted by the state.

The new indictment charges York with 120 counts of child molestation, 50 counts of aggravated child molestation, 13 counts of enticing a child for indecent purposes, one count of rape, two counts of influencing a witness, two counts of sexual exploitation of a minor and nine counts of statutory rape.

The new state indictment charges Johnson with 10 counts of child molestation and two counts of aggravated child molestation. Chandra Lampkin faces three counts of child molestation and two counts of aggravated child molestation. Khadijah Merritt faces eight counts of child molestation and three counts of aggravated child molestation. Isityr Cole faces one count of child molestation, and is the only defendant free on bond.

Federally, York faces four counts of transporting minors across state lines for the purpose of sex. Johnson also is named in one of those counts.

York pleads innocent in Putnam case

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution/October 26, 2002
By Bob Osinski

Eatonton -- Sect leader and accused child molester Dwight York returned shackled and handcuffed Friday to Putnam County. It was the first time since his May arrest on federal and state charges that the 57-year-old leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors had come back to the county where he had once hoped to turn his 400-acre farm into a separate nation called the Egypt of the West. He had been kept at an undisclosed location since the arrest.

The official reason for York's visit was a court appearance, where he pleaded not guilty to all 208 counts of the state's indictment, which accuses York of repeated sexual molestation of the children of some of his followers.

Approximately 200 of his followers came to the courthouse to support York, giving the proceedings the flavor of a rally.

On the courthouse green, they chanted, "God will make a way!" and "We love you!" as York, dressed in a blue business suit, was led into a police van.

Inside the courtroom, York played subtly to his audience. During a recess, he turned and smiled at his followers, who were almost all dressed in black.

When his co-defendant Kathy Johnson, whom his attorneys have referred to as his wife, passed him to enter her own plea of not guilty, he briefly clasped her hand.

Johnson is charged with participating in some of the alleged acts of molestation.

One of York's supporters, Augusta-based pastor Alexander Smith, said he and many of the others question the validity of the charges.

"We don't think he's capable of these horrendous charges," Smith said.

Friday's hearing may be one of the last times York appears in Putnam County.

Superior Court Judge William Prior Jr. agreed with defense and prosecuting attorneys that York's trial should be moved away from the county.

Prior indicated he will pick a trial site within a few weeks. Prosecutors expect the trial to start in January.

Judge sets date for trial of Nuwaubian leader

Associated Press/November 26, 2002

Milledgeville -- A judge has set a tentative date for the child molestation trial of Malachi York, leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

Superior Court Judge William A. Prior Tuesday said the trial would be held in Covington or Griffin on January 13.

The trial must be held before the third Monday in March because some of the defendants have filed motions for a speedy trial.

Among the other counties mentioned as possible locations for the trial during a hearing last month were Fulton, Glynn, Bulloch and Chatham.

York and four women are charged in a 208-count state indictment accusing them of sexually abusing children.

An investigation into York's quasi-religious sect began after police received anonymous tips that York was molesting children in the group.

A May indictment charged him with 120 counts of child molestation and related crimes. That figure almost doubled in October.

Nuwaubian leader's wife freed on bail

The Augusta Chronicle/December 4, 2002

Eatonton -- One of the four women facing charges of child molestation along with Nuwaubian leader Malachi York was released from jail Tuesday after making bail.

An Alpharetta man put up a \$75,000 cash bond for Kathy Johnson, the woman described by Mr. York's followers as his "main wife."

Mr. York remains in custody without bail. He is the leader of the quasi-religious sect that moved from Brooklyn, N.Y., to Putnam County in 1993.

Mr. York and Ms. Johnson were arrested in May and face charges of sexually abusing children in a 208-count state indictment and a four-count federal indictment.

Nuwaubians distribute fliers in Newton County

**Leaflets contain information on case
against Malachi York**

**Macon Telegraph/December, 27,
2002**

By Rob Peecher

Covington -- Though Malachi York's trial was moved to Newton County because of pre-trial publicity, some of his followers are trying to get their view of the case to potential jurors before the trial.

Since Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge William A. Prior announced four weeks ago that he was moving the trial to Newton County, Nuwaubians have been handing out fliers and leaving tabloid newspapers on car windshields in downtown Covington and at area shopping centers.

The fliers contain information and opinions mostly about Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills and the case against York, the leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors. York, who was arrested in May by the FBI, is charged in a 208-count state indictment with sexually abusing children.

District Attorney Fred Bright, who is prosecuting York and the woman referred to as his "main wife," Kathy Johnson, said the flier and newspaper appear to be intended to sway potential jurors.

Cult leader's child molestation trial set for Jan. 28

Associated Press/January 17, 2003

Eatonton, Ga. -- A religious cult leader facing nearly 200 child molestation charges is scheduled for trial later this month in suburban Atlanta.

Ocmulgee Circuit Superior Court Judge William A. Prior turned down several defense motions Thursday, setting the stage for the trial of Malachi York, leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, to begin on Jan. 28 in Covington, southeast of Atlanta.

The trial was moved to metro Atlanta to ensure the case is not tainted by publicity.

The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors is a predominantly black group that refers to York as "the master teacher."

It began as an Islamic sect in the early 1970s in Brooklyn, N.Y., but when York and his followers moved to Putnam County 10 years ago, the group claimed York was an extraterrestrial.

Followers have built pyramids and other ancient Egyptian-style structures at the group's 476-acre village in western Putnam County. For nearly six years, they have been at odds with county officials over building and zoning issues.

In May, authorities arrested York and raided the group's village after several former members came forward with allegations of child molestation.

Co-defendant Kathy Johnson, referred to by York's followers as his "main wife," is charged with 12 counts of molesting children.

Judge turns down Nuwaubian leader's motions

**York's trial to begin Jan. 28 in
Covington**

**Macon Telegraph/January 17, 2003
By Rob Peecher**

Eatonton -- A Superior Court judge Thursday denied a series of motions from Malachi York to again move the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors leader's trial, to postpone the trial and to allow defense psychiatrists to interview the prosecution's witnesses.

York faces nearly 200 charges of molesting children. Co-defendant Kathy Johnson - referred to by York's followers as his "main wife" - is charged with 12 counts of molesting children.

Ocmulgee Circuit Superior Court Judge William A. Prior will resume hearing motions this morning. The trial is scheduled to begin Jan. 28 in Covington.

Among the motions denied Thursday by Prior was one to dismiss Johnson from the case because the prosecution failed to hold her trial within a set amount of time.

Johnson's attorney, Brian Steele, filed a demand for a speedy trial Sept. 5 - in the June term of court - giving the prosecution two terms of court in which to hold the trial. Steele argued that because jurors in the June term were never dismissed by a judge's order, the demand for speedy trial began running immediately, even though there were only 10 days left in that term.

"Unless there's an order stating these jurors are excused and dismissed, they are subject to recall," Steele said.

Putnam County Clerk of Court Sheila Layson testified that in the June term of court, she had notified jurors through a telephone recording that they did not need to show up for court, but no judge had issued an order dismissing them.

District Attorney Fred Bright argued that the jurors were not impaneled because Layson had notified them not to show up for court because no more trials were scheduled. Layson testified that a Superior Court judge had told her to notify the jurors not to show up.

Steele's argument was impassioned, and he was adamant that he was correct in his interpretation of the law.

"I understand the law," Steele told Prior. "I read every statute that comes out. É It's my passion. I understand I look strange saying acquit Mrs. Johnson based on a piece of paper that I filed, but that is the law."

Steele said he would appeal Prior's decision.

Prior also took under advisement a motion to suppress evidence seized from York's home in the village during a search on May 8.

Before Thursday's hearing got under way, Prior referred to the defense motions as "York's motions." York then stood up and said, "I am secured and do not give permission for anybody to use my name."

Though York's attorney said he had "no comment" on his client's statement, York was referring to "common law" practices the Nuwaubians have used in the past. Common law courts are not legally binding and are typically associated with anti-government militias in Ohio and other parts of the Midwest. In 1999, a common law adherent, Everett Stout, advised Nuwaubians on how to deal with problems the group was having over zoning and building issues.

Prior took under advisement a motion from the defense to limit the number of investigators

allowed to sit at the prosecution's table during the trial.

Manny Aurora, one of York's attorneys, argued the presence of the law enforcement personnel would make witnesses feel "intimidated and uncomfortable," but assistant district attorney Dawn Baskin said the investigators are instrumental for the prosecution in presenting its case.

Baskin is asking that Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills and one of his detectives, an FBI agent and the DA's investigator be allowed to stay in the courtroom, even though they all may be called to testify.

The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors is a predominately black group that refers to York as "the Master Teacher." It began as an Islamic sect in the early 1970s in Brooklyn, N.Y., but when York and his followers moved to Putnam County 10 years ago, the group claimed York was an extra-terrestrial. The group built pyramids and other ancient Egyptian-style structures on the 476-acre village in western Putnam County, and for nearly six years has been at odds with county officials over building and zoning issues.

In May, authorities arrested York and raided the group's village after several former members came forward with allegations of child molestation.

Lawyers argue details in York case

The Telegraph/January 18, 2003
By Rob Peecher

Eatonton -- With just more than a week to go before Nuwaubian sect leader Malachi York stands trial for sexually abusing 13 children, a

Superior Court judge is still considering one issue key to the prosecution.

The judge said he will rule next week on whether to allow evidence seized from York's home shortly after his arrest last May.

York, who was scheduled to be tried with co-defendant Kathy Johnson, may stand trial alone. Before Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge William A. Prior began hearing final pre-trial motions Friday, Johnson's attorney Brian Steele announced his intention to appeal one of Prior's Thursday rulings.

Steele had filed a motion asking the judge to set Johnson free because, he argued, the prosecution's time to get her to trial under his speedy trial demand had expired. Prior, though, ruled that the speedy trial demand gives the prosecution until March 17 to try her.

Steele said he will appeal the ruling to the Georgia Court of Appeals, which effectively takes Johnson out of Prior's jurisdiction until the appellate court issues a ruling.

Unless that ruling comes before the trial begins Jan. 28, York will stand trial alone.

York is the head of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a predominately black fraternal organization that moved to Putnam County a decade ago. Last year, federal and local officers raided the group's 476-acre Putnam County village to serve state and federal search warrants.

Just before the raid, York was arrested in Milledgeville and taken into federal custody. He faces four federal counts of allegedly transporting minors across state lines for the purpose of having sex with them. He faces 197 counts in a state indictment accusing him of sexually abusing children. The children are all former members of his group.

Johnson and three other women were indicted with York on the state charges - each woman facing significantly fewer charges than York.

Prior agreed last month to sever the other three women as co-defendants, requiring the state to try them separately, but he denied a similar motion from Johnson.

As the hearing Friday was nearing an end, York - who wore a red fez with a black tassle - stood up and repeated a statement he made Thursday in court that he is "secured" and does not give permission to use his name.

"If you proceed it will cost you \$500,000," York said.

He also said "all deals are off" if Prior continues to use his name.

Though York's attorney Ed Garland said he had nothing to say regarding York's statement, York was referring to "common law" practices the Nuwaubians have used in the past. Common law courts are not legally binding and are typically associated with anti-government militias in the Midwest.

During the hearing, Nuwaubians gave members of the media a "copyright notice" that purports to provide notice that York has copyrighted his name and aliases and the document threatens certain financial penalties for "unauthorized" use of his name. The documents were stamped: "Received, Jan. 08, 2003" by the "Clerk of Federal Moorish Cherokee Consular Court, USA."

Also Friday, Prior denied bond for York, even though a former elementary school principal and two Macon police officers testified on his behalf.

Prior also said he will allow the prosecution to use testimony regarding the child molestation, which amounts to 64 similar transactions. According to assistant district attorney Dawn Baskin, this testimony will come from adults who say they were sexually abused by York while they were children, people who "solicited" sex from children and adults on York's behalf, and from adults who participated in group sex acts with York similar to group sex acts the

prosecution alleges York participated in with children.

York's attorney Manny Aurora said that with 197 counts against his client, the prosecution didn't need 64 more.

"They've got 197 counts - let's fight over those," Aurora said.

Prior also said he would allow the defense to put up York's followers as witnesses who can testify that they lived at the village and were not molested. Baskin argued against it, but Aurora said the prosecution only wants to "let in all the bad stuff."

"That's our whole defense," Aurora said.

Ga. Religious Sect Founder Pleads Guilty

**The Associated Press/January 24,
2003**

Macon, GA -- The founder of a religious sect in central Georgia admitted in federal court Thursday to having sex with children in the group and pleaded guilty to two charges.

If the court accepts a plea agreement, Malachi York will serve 15 years in federal prison, followed by three years of supervised release. Sentencing has not been scheduled.

York allegedly transported minors across state lines for sex after the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors settled in rural Putnam County. He pleaded guilty to one

count of unlawful transport of minors for the purpose of engaging in sex acts and a count of trying to evade financial reporting requirements.

York is scheduled to stand trial Tuesday on state charges, but Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie Jr. said Thursday that York has reached a similar plea deal with Georgia. A hearing in the state's case has been set for Friday.

Nuwaubian leader pleads guilty on child charges

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution/January 24, 2003
By Bill Osinski

Nuwaubian leader Dwight York pleaded guilty Thursday in federal court to charges of transporting children across state lines for purposes of illegal sex.

Today, York is scheduled to enter another guilty plea in a related state case: He was indicted last May on 197 counts of child molestation.

According to defense and prosecution sources, York's recommended sentence in both courts will be 50 years, with a minimum of 15 years before he is eligible for parole.

Both sides declined to release details of today's plea agreement on the state charges.

York, 57, also agreed to forfeit the more than \$400,000 in cash that was confiscated when more than 300 federal and local police officers raided his Putnam County farm after his arrest last May. Part of the money will be distributed

to York's victims, for counseling and other related expenses.

The plea bargain effectively ends a four-year federal and local investigation into child abuse allegations, which led to what prosecutors say was the nation's largest prosecution of a single defendant in a child molestation case.

York had been scheduled to go to trial next week in Newton County. There were 216 counts related to child molestation against York in the state indictment, and the state had named 13 victims. Though some are now adults, all are children of followers of York in his group, the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, and all were children at the time they were molested.

Prosecutors said the number of counts could have reached the thousands, but the victims were unable to provide specific dates for all the times York sexually abused them.

York's guilty pleas, entered in Macon, eliminate the need for a trial, which had potential pitfalls for both sides.

From the defense viewpoint, it would have been highly difficult to cross-examine the child witnesses aggressively. Also, by going to trial, York would have risked receiving a much longer sentence, had he been found guilty.

From the prosecution viewpoint, the plea bargain means that the victims will not have the traumatic experience of testifying about the abuse. The deal assures York will spend most of the rest of his life in prison. At a trial, there would always have been the chance of a hung jury, or an acquittal.

York and approximately 100 of his followers left their base in Brooklyn, N.Y. in 1993, and moved to a 400-acre farm property in Putnam County. In New York, they had been a purportedly Muslim group called Ansaru Allah Community.

But after they moved to Georgia, the group adopted a new, Egyptian-styled ideology and

costumes. York re-named them the United Nuwaubian nation of Moors.

Along the entrance to their property on Ga. 142, they built pyramids, obelisks and Egyptian-styled statuary. They called the property Egypt of the West.

However, the state's case against York was that all the trappings were merely camouflage for York's practices of taking his followers' wealth and having unfettered, repeated sex with their children.

According to an affidavit filed in support of the state's search warrant served on York's farm, his followers believed that he was a supreme, god-like being.

The child victims were selected by York, separated from their parents, and brought closer to him, according to the affidavit.

Sect leader admits he molested children

The Athens Banner-Herald/January 25, 2003
By Stephen Gurr

Dwight "Malachi" York admitted Friday to molesting 13 children from his quasi-Egyptian religious sect at their Putnam County compound, and prosecutors said he also molested numerous children in his Athens mansion on Mansfield Court.

In a negotiated plea, the 57-year-old leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors agreed with Putnam County prosecutors to a sentence of 14 years in prison, followed by 36 years of probation, Assistant District Attorney Dawn Baskin said. The prison term will run concurrently with a federal sentence of 14 years

he is expected to receive in U.S District Court after admitting to similar crimes on Thursday.

Among the state charges, York pleaded guilty to 40 counts of aggravated child molestation, 34 counts of child molestation, one count of child exploitation and two counts of influencing witnesses.

York pleaded guilty Thursday in federal court to one count of unlawful transport of minors for the purpose of engaging in sex acts and one count of attempting to evade financial reporting requirements. Prosecutors are recommending 14 years to be served concurrently with the state sentence, U.S. Attorney Pam Lightsey said. The government is also seizing about \$400,000 in cash and about 20 guns confiscated in Athens and Eatonton.

York will likely serve out his entire sentence in a federal penitentiary, Baskin said. "This plea is pretty carefully calibrated where it's long enough to be real punishment," said former Putnam County Attorney Frank Ford, who was present at Friday's hearing and has had frequent clashes with the Nuwaubians over zoning issues at the group's compound. "It's short enough that he won't die in prison, but it's long enough that he won't live too much longer after he's released."

York would be 71 years old if he served the full prison term. With good behavior, he would be eligible for parole after 12 years and nine months.

During Friday's hearing, Baskin told Judge William A. Prior Jr. that witnesses could testify to at least 45 similar acts of child molestation that occurred in York's Athens home. York has never been charged with crimes committed in Clarke County, but was indicted last year on 208 counts involving molestation at the group's Putnam County compound.

Reached after the plea, Baskin said evidence gathered during a May 2002 search of the Athens home corroborated statements given by the victims.

"We know for at least half of the victims listed in the indictment, their sexual molestation began in Putnam County," Baskin said. "From the time Mr. York moved into the house in Athens in 1999 until his return to Putnam County in early 2001, many of these victims were transported from Eatonton to Athens, where they would stay for weeks on end."

Baskin said the children had to ask York for even the most minor things in writing, which he called "request submissions." If the children refused to engage in sex acts with York, he would deny their requests, Baskin said.

Reached Friday, Clarke County District Attorney Ken Mauldin said he had been made aware of the alleged acts in Clarke County by Putnam County District Attorney Fred Bright. Mauldin said part of Bright's negotiated plea with York stipulated that he would not be prosecuted for the crimes alleged in Clarke County. All of the alleged victims in Clarke County were included in Bright's case against York in Putnam County, Mauldin said.

Baskin said though the 13 victims were prepared to testify, they also sought a resolution where they could avoid re-living their childhood traumas in open court.

"These victims all came under tremendous pressure from the followers of Mr. York," Baskin said. "A lot of them wanted this to come to an end. Out of a courtesy to our victims we decided to agree to a plea of this nature. If there had been a trial and a conviction, we would have looked at years of appeals that would not bring a conclusion. This brings a conclusion."

And the plea, Baskin says, unmasks York.

"What we gave to our victims is that Mr. York stood up in court and said, 'I did it,'" Baskin said. "There's no way his followers can say he was railroaded or there was a conspiracy."

Said Ford, "The biggest thing is this guy who claimed to be a messiah stood up in court and admitted he was nothing less than a monster."

Fall of the Nuwaubian empire?

Athens Banner-Herald/January 25, 2003

By Stephen Gurr

Doctor, reverend, master teacher, rabbi -- Dwight "Malachi" York has used all those monikers almost interchangeably. But as he prepares to assume a new title -- inmate -- the future of his empire hangs in serious doubt.

Most believe the religious sect York founded some 10 years ago on 400 acres of Putnam County farmland -- the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors -- peaked in the late 1990s, when thousands would attend the group's Savior Day celebrations each June. Flush with the success of his movement, York bought a \$550,000 home in a quiet Athens subdivision and spent another \$385,000 on a commercial property on West Broad Street.

His followers, dressed in their colorful, quasi-Egyptian garb, were welcomed warmly in the Classic City, where they participated in city parades and were feted as honored guests at the fall 2000 local NAACP banquet.

But today there are few signs that the Nuwaubian movement continues to thrive. Work has halted on the faux-Moorish building at the corner of West Broad and South Church streets, first proposed as a lodge then licensed as a bookstore.

York's store at an Atlanta Highway strip mall, "All Eyes on Egypt," was closed Friday, the same day he pleaded guilty to 77 counts of child molestation and related charges. No one answered the door at York's mansion on Mansfield Court.

Reached earlier in the week, Nuwaubian members declined to comment.

Nuwaubians in the News

While the government seized \$400,000 in cash and numerous guns found in searches of his Putnam County compound and Athens home, federal and state prosecutors have no plans to take any of York's other assets.

But others have claims against York. The father of one victim has filed a \$1 billion civil suit against the Brooklyn-born sect leader.

"There will definitely be some people coming after him," said Manchester attorney Ronny Jones, who says York still owes him \$15,000 in unpaid legal fees. Last month Clarke County Superior Court Judge Lawton Stephens issued a judgment against York for the bill, which was accrued when Jones was assisting York in a Putnam County zoning dispute.

"I'm trying to collect on the judgment," Jones said.

It may not be easy. While York's mail-order business selling Egyptian-themed jewelry, clothes and books was apparently thriving, he eventually had them incorporated in other people's names, according to former Putnam County Attorney Frank Ford, who had frequent clashes with York over zoning.

As for the properties still in York's name, including the home and building, Ford doubts they have much equity.

"Once payments stop being made, they will probably revert to the lender for foreclosure," Ford said.

Athens-Clarke County officials will move next week to rescind York's building permit for work on the Broad Street store, formerly the location of Ideal Amusements. Director of Building Inspections Ken Hix said officials can cancel a building permit if a project goes six months without significant progress.

"We have not had any inspections there since May," Hix said.

The aura surrounding York seems to have faded among his followers, as well. Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills described a "noticeable exodus of sorts" at the Putnam County compound.

"I can say a lot of them disappeared from around here after his arrest," Sills said.

While as many as 200 followers have packed court hearings for York in the past, only two supporters were present for his guilty plea Friday. Ford believes York put the word out for them to stay away.

"They didn't know this was going on," Ford said of the negotiated plea. "He kept them out of the courtroom while he was making these admissions."

"Based on what I saw today, (the group) has definitely weakened," said Putnam County Assistant District Attorney Dawn Baskin. "I would seriously doubt they would continue as a community in Putnam County."

Others aren't so sure. Jones believes York's daughter, Hagar York-El, could step into the void left by York.

"She could definitely speak for her father and continue his teachings," Jones said.

In Athens, it's harder to gauge the Nuwaubians' continued presence. But the predominantly black group has won friends in the African-American community and been praised as hard-working, self-sufficient people.

"They're people who go to work every day, pay rent or own homes," said local activist Thomas Oglesby. "They bring entrepreneurship to this town. You've got brick masons, carpenters, locksmiths, bakers, all of them have something going."

Oglesby doesn't think York's conviction will lead the group to dissolve.

"That's not going to happen," he said. "This group is not a small group, this group isn't just in Georgia -- it's nationwide and worldwide."

Said Walter Allen Jr., who runs the local African-American magazine "Zebra" and has employed some Nuwaubians, "this case has been going on for eight months, and they've still been functioning."

Sect's Leader Takes a Fall

Guilty of sex charges in Ga.

Newsday.com/January 26, 2003
By Tina Susman

Eatonton, Ga. -- Strangers are sure to stand out in a small town like this, especially strangers who come from Brooklyn, dress like cowboys, claim allegiance to a leader from a distant planet and build 40-foot-high pyramids on their land.

The locals could handle that. What worried them is when the newcomers' hermetic leader, Dwight York, declared his 476-acre spread a sovereign state, posted armed guards, and began publishing angry fliers alleging a racist conspiracy after local officials cited him for zoning and building violations.

Then, the letters arrived: typed, single-spaced appeals for help sent to local law enforcement authorities from people living inside Tama-Re, as York called his ornate pyramid-, sphinx- and obelisk-studded property on Shady Dale Road.

"It said, 'We're begging for help. York is molesting children,' and it named names of children," said Francis Ford, an Eatonton attorney who had represented the county in its zoning disputes with York and his group, the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors. "I wasn't

expecting that, but I believed it. The Nuwaubians are evil."

The letters helped crack what prosecutors say is Georgia's biggest child abuse case ever, which led to 197 state and four federal charges.

York pleaded guilty Thursday to two federal charges, one involving transport of minors from upstate Sullivan County, N.Y., to Georgia for sex. Friday, he pleaded guilty to 77 of the state charges, which will put him in prison for the rest of his life

To Sheriff Howard Sills, Ford and other locals, the case justifies the wariness they felt toward York and his disciples since their arrival in 1993.

To Nuwaubian supporters, who over the years included Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson, NAACP officials and Georgia politicians, the case was evidence of racial harassment Southern style, in which a white, small-town sheriff targeted a black man who challenged him.

"If this group had white skin and was building pyramids, they would be ignored," said Rep. Tyrone Brooks (D-Atlanta), before learning of the guilty plea. Brooks said later that he was surprised to hear of York's plea but hoped the group would stay together.

Prosecutors denied being driven by racism, noting that York's alleged victims were black, and that most of the testimony came from blacks, including many who said they were abused in New York when York was based there.

It's difficult to get the Nuwaubians' point of view because they shun the media. The group has stuck by York and denied claims by the FBI and the Southern Poverty Law Center that it is an anti-white hate group, despite York's description of whites as "demons."

One Nuwaubian, Anthony Evans, said negative publicity had taken its toll. Part of the Nuwaubians' spread is for sale, and more may be

Nuwaubians in the News

added, said Evans. "It's like you can see the writing on the wall from Putnam County saying, 'Get out, Get out.'"

The property, a former game farm, resembles an abandoned King Tut theme park erected alongside a two-lane rural highway. "Welcome to the Holyland," reads a giant sign facing the road, where skid marks indicate the shock of drivers faced with a field of Egyptian artifacts rising out of the countryside.

In the past, York's June 6 "Savior's Day" celebrations there would draw thousands of followers to celebrate their Nuwaubian beliefs, which are difficult to define. Nuwaubians say that their group embraces all races and religions, and that their "Master Teacher" is York, an alien from the planet Rizq in the galaxy of Illwuyn. York has promised them that a spaceship will arrive this year and carry a lucky 144,000 to a better place.

Why York, who now goes by Dr. Malachi Z. York, left New York for Eatonton in 1993 is open to debate. His critics say he chose Eatonton, a predominantly black town of 6,500, because he saw it as an ideal place to find supporters and an area too rural to deal with building and other violations.

Literature produced by the Nuwaubians says Eatonton was chosen because of American Indian rock formations in the area. York, 56, claims to be descended from the Yamassee tribe of Georgia.

What's clear is that the move south followed a checkered history in New York, where York served prison time for resisting arrest, assault and possession of a dangerous weapon and later started an Islamic sect in Brooklyn. An FBI report accuses the group of running a virtual crime syndicate in Bushwick during the late 1970s.

It was only in 1997, after a television station visited Tama-Re and mentioned that the facilities included a nightclub, that Eatonton officials confronted York. By this time, the

Nuwaubians had traded their cowboy clothes for long robes and fezzes, and Tama-Re's residents were believed to number in the hundreds. The county cited York for running illegal commercial enterprises and for other building violations.

York cried racism and accused local officials such as Sills and Ford of everything from murder to wife-beating and cat-kicking. Hundreds of York followers would hand out fliers claiming a conspiracy. Locals became alarmed as the dispute grew uglier.

Until then, Sills said the Nuwaubians, who adopted that name after leaving New York, were considered strange but relatively harmless. "It was unusual to see a group of black people dressed in cowboy hats, boots and belts with big shiny belt buckles," said Sills. "I can't tell you I didn't notice it, because I did, but I didn't do anything about it."

The letters alleging child molestation transformed what had been a zoning dispute into a criminal investigation. York was arrested last May.

A raid of Tama-Re confirmed accusers' claims that York's followers lived in squalor. Mark Robinson, an investigator who took part, described "filth, raw sewage everywhere, and people just stacked on top of each other."

York's accusers said men and women were housed in separate, barracks-like buildings while York lived in luxury in a large house with a swimming pool.

York, meanwhile, says his clashes with Georgia officials have revived his belief that whites are demons. "I found out that trying to be a nice guy and work with white folks just don't work," a Nuwaubian newsletter quoted York as saying before his arrest.

Sect Had Roots In Brooklyn

Newsday.com/January 26, 2003

By Tina Susman

Early in the morning of April 19, 1979, Horace Greene was shot dead on a Brooklyn street as he went to open the day care center he ran.

It seems the sort of crime that should have been easy to crack. It was brazen, committed on a public street. The victim was a high-profile local activist.

The city offered a \$10,000 reward. There was even a witness who provided a description of a bearded gunman wearing a Muslim robe and cap, recalls Bill Clark, a retired New York Police homicide detective.

Twenty-four years later, though, no one has been charged in the murder, despite police and FBI investigations that pointed to involvement of a black Islamic group whose leader, then known as Isa Muhammad, was accused by neighbors, former supporters and the FBI of terrorizing the Bushwick section where his Ansaru Allah Community was based in the late 1970s.

A 1993 FBI report based on information from Ansaru Allah followers says Greene angered Muhammad, who is now known as Dwight York or Dr. Malachi Z. York, by doing what few in the neighborhood dared: speaking out against York's racially charged rhetoric and his attempts to expand his group's influence.

According to the report, informants identified Greene's killer as a York confidant and Ansaru Allah member known

as Hashim the Warrior. The man is now in prison for an unrelated, 1983 double murder.

York denied Ansaru Allah was involved in crime, but several of his closest confidants were charged with various crimes, including arson, assault, and robbery in the 1970s-'90s in cities where Ansaru Allah was active, including New York.

How York managed to operate in New York from the early 1970s until he left for Georgia in 1993 can be attributed to the politics of the time and to the strict control he appears to have had over those around him, say law enforcement officials.

The Ansaru Allah Community's growth, coincided with rising tensions in the United States between the government and Muslim groups, Clark noted.

"Police were very sensitive to observing the religious sanctity of institutions like this," he said.

In addition, police were preoccupied with other things, such as the crack epidemic, said Stephen Lungen, the district attorney of Sullivan County, where York ran a heavily guarded compound from 1983-93.

"Without someone telling you something is wrong, you just don't have the right to bang the door down and tear the place apart," Lungen said.

Brooklyn police had the same problem. "Potential witnesses became less and less cooperative as they got more and more frightened," Clark said.

Survivors Speak out about Bizarre Sect Leader, Sentenced to Prison

New York-WABC/February 7, 2003

Tonight, an insider's story about a bizarre, Brooklyn-based religious sect and allegations of widespread child molestation by the group's leader. The leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors pleaded guilty to scores of sex abuse charges and will spend years in prison. Now his victims finally feel it is safe to speak out. One insider talked exclusively with The Investigators' Sarah Wallace.

How could someone get away with abusing countless children- allegedly two generations of victims for nearly 30 years? Tonight, we have an incredible story from within and a warning about what can happen when an entire community gives over their collective lives to one person.

For most of her life it was all Habiba Washington ever knew. The 27-year-old was born into the communal world of the Ansaru Allah community in Bushwick, Brooklyn. The outside world was shunned.

Habiba Washington: "Because the community is basically blocked from the outside world, you don't know anything but what you know there."

What she could not know is how wrong it all was.

Washington: "The abuse go beyond, further beyond child molestation. It's the fact that families were separated. People were physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually abused for years."

Girls and boys, separated from their parents, housed in two buildings on Bushwick Avenue.

Every move of every one dictated by their leader Dwight York.

Washington: "He would fill you up with his information, with his indoctrination... Take away from you, everything that you know. Tell you that this is what the white man has been teaching you and it's not the right way... it's the wrong way of thinking, it's the wrong way of living. That everything I am teaching you is the right way."

His religious teachings changed with whatever doctrine he thought would attract followers. First they were Muslims, then Hebrews. When York moved the group to rural Georgia in 1993 he decided on an Egyptian theme. And there, in the center of the Bible Belt, several hundred followers became Christians. But the ultimate "god" was Dwight York, who staged an elaborate "Savior's Day" every June on his birthday.

Sarah Wallace, Eyewitness News: "It was clearly a cult, correct?"

Washington: "Clearly a cult. When you're in it, you don't see it, you don't see that you're a cult, because you really, really believe you're doing something for your people. It's like, 'No, we're not a cult. We're helping black people. Like he'll say something like, 'your average cult, tell us how many black cults do you know?' And it's like, 'OK we're not a cult because we're black.' Every cult the government has busted has been a white cult."

York promised empowerment, instead he enslaved and abused. Female followers living on the 400-acre, heavily guarded compound were kept separate from the men. Usually, York victimized little girls, but sometimes boys as well.

Washington: "He raised us. He had a garden. It was like a garden, and he was the gardener and he picked us like flocks."

Wallace: "To do what ever he wanted?"

Washington: "To do whatever he wanted. It started off with girls my age, 13, there was like a group of us that it started off with and then it was the younger age and then it became younger. And when he got comfortable with the fact that he was doing it, like I said, no limits. And because everybody had been so afraid of opening their mouths for years, so afraid, he also realized that nobody was going to speak against me, because he's made comments. Comments like, 'If you ever open your mouth, I'll have you killed.'"

Habiba finally left the compound a year and a half ago, returning to New York. Only then, from the outside, could she truly see the truth within.

Washington: "You watch the news, you hear about people who rape people. You hear about child molesters and it's like, 'OK, but this is how I lived my life.'"

The turning point: A reunion with several ex-followers. Habiba and other victims agreed to tell their story to federal and state authorities.

On January 24th, Dwight York avoided a trial by pleading guilty in a Georgia courtroom to 77 sex charges. He'll spend at least 13 years in a federal prison. Habiba would have been one of the witnesses. Now, she's rebuilding her life, plans to go to law school and become an advocate for children.

Washington: "That community took the most important part of our lives away from us."

Wallace: "Which is?"

Washington: "Which is our childhood, when we were the most vulnerable."

We spoke with a number of women and teenage girls who had been scheduled to testify against York. Many of them are disappointed that he pleaded guilty and avoided a trial. The victims wanted to face York in court and tell him to his face he can't hurt them any more.

York getting a lot of jail mail

**The Macon Telegraph/March 2, 2003
By Rob Peecher**

Gray -- Cult leader Malachi York remains popular among at least some of his followers a month after pleading guilty to 75 counts of child molestation.

York, who pleaded guilty to state and federal charges but has not yet been sentenced by a federal judge, is waiting in the Jones County jail to be sentenced and taken to a federal prison. In jail, he is receiving significantly more mail than other inmates.

"He does get a lot of mail," said Jones County Sheriff's Maj. Barbara Burnette. "He gets a pile where the average inmate gets one or two letters a day."

Burnette said York is receiving as many as 20 or 30 letters a day, and some of the envelopes contain money.

"He gets books and stuff people send him - books, cards, letters and money," Burnette said.

Burnette did not release the amount of money York has received since entering the jail Jan. 24, the day he pleaded guilty, but she did say it is far more than any other inmate.

Before pleading guilty, York was in custody at the Putnam County Sheriff's Office where he received fewer letters but still more than average, according to administrative assistant Teresa Slade.

York was in the Putnam County jail Jan. 6-24 when he pleaded guilty and was transferred to Jones County.

In those 18 days, York received money from three or four visitors totaling \$230. The money

went into an account managed by the sheriff's office through which York could buy a variety of personal items once a week ranging from toothpaste to shaving lotion to candies and snacks.

In his three weeks at the Putnam County jail, York spent a total of \$254 in two separate "store-call" purchases.

York is the founder of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a quasi-religious organization he began in Brooklyn, N.Y., in the early 1970s as an Islamic sect. The group moved to a 476-acre farm in 1993, and York began claiming to be an alien from the planet Rizq.

In recent years the Nuwaubians have adopted ancient Egyptian themes, building pyramids and other Egyptian-style structures on its compound.

York was arrested on federal warrants in May and was subsequently indicted by a Putnam County grand jury in a 208-count indictment. In January, York pleaded guilty to two federal charges - one of financial fraud and another of transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes. He also pleaded guilty to 77 state counts involving child sexual molestation and two counts of influencing a witness.

York is expected to be sentenced to serve 13 years in a federal prison with his state sentence to run concurrent. He will be 71-years-old when he is eligible for parole.

Four women who were among his followers also face state charges of participating in the child molestation with York.

When he pleaded guilty, he implicated each of the four women in the counts he pleaded guilty to, but the four women remain free on bond and have not been tried yet.

York's wife pleads guilty

Athens Banner-Herald/April 1, 2003
By Stephen Gurr

The wife of convicted child molester and cult leader Dwight "Malachi" York pleaded guilty to a felony charge Tuesday in federal court.

Kathy Johnson, 34, pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in Macon to misprision of a felony.

Misprision of a felony means "she knew a felony was taking place and she didn't do anything about it," said U.S. Attorney spokeswoman Pam Lightsey.

Johnson, along with York, had originally been charged with crossing state lines for the purposes of sex with a minor. As part of the plea agreement, that charge was dropped in exchange for Johnson's admission that she knew the offense was taking place.

Authorities said York and Johnson took children from the group's Putnam County compound to Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla., where they engaged in sex acts with the minors.

Johnson faces a maximum sentence of three years in prison when she is sentenced by Judge Hugh Lawson in about two months. She remains free on a \$75,000 bail.

Johnson still faces state charges involving the molestation of a number of young victims after being indicted last year in Putnam County Superior Court. That case has not yet gone to trial.

York, a self-styled messiah of the quasi-religious United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, admitted in November to molesting at least 13 young boys and girls at his group's Eatonton compound. In exchange for the guilty plea, York was given a

state-recommended sentence of 14 years in prison, to run concurrently with his federal sentence.

Work on Nuwaubian building continues

Unsure if project will ever be complete

**Athens Banner-Herald/May 21, 2003
By Janis Reid**

The Nuwaubians are a quasi-religious sect that combines elements of black empowerment, biblical themes and Egyptian polytheism, as reflected in the Egyptian carvings emerging on the facade of the building at 815 W. Broad St.

The Broad Street property was deeded in March 2000 to Nuwaubian founder Malachi Z. York - who brought a group of followers from New York in 1993 to create a compound near Eatonton in east Georgia's Putnam County. Plans for the bookstore were received by the Athens-Clarke County Building Permits and Inspections Department in August 2001.

In January, York, also known as Dwight York, was sentenced to 14 years in prison after admitting in a negotiated plea agreement that he molested numerous children at the Putnam County compound and at his Athens mansion on Mansfield Court.

Last week, the contractors listed on the building permit for the Broad Street structure - Eatonton-based Nuwaubian General Contracting - asked the building permits department for permission to relocate an office in the building.

According to the site plan, half of the building is slotted for a customer section including bookshelves and tables, with the other side

housing the office and a large open space for book storage.

Calls made to Nuwaubian General Contracting were not returned Wednesday.

Phillip Seagraves, assistant director of the building permits department, said it is unusual to have a building under construction for two years unless there is something holding up the project.

Seagraves added the building permit will remain current as long as the project does not go six months without progress.

Thomas Chism, owner of the All Eyes on Egypt bookstore and gift shop on Atlanta Highway, is listed as a contact person on the site plans filed with the building permits department.

But on Wednesday, Chism said he did not know anything about the progress of construction at the Broad Street location.

He did say, though, that once it is completed, he will be moving his bookstore into the building.

Black sect leader is granted delay in sentencing

Atlanta Journal-Constitution/May 30, 2003

Eatonton -- A religious leader who admitted molesting 13 children was granted a two-week continuance Wednesday, one day before being sentenced.

Dwight York, leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a mostly black sect based in Putnam County, pleaded guilty to multiple child

molestation charges and signed a plea agreement that would send him to prison for 15 years.

York's attorney, Ed Garland, would not comment on the continuance, and U.S. Attorney Max Wood declined to comment.

Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit District Attorney Fred Bright said if there is a problem with the federal plea agreement, a state plea will still stand unless York decides to withdraw the plea agreement.

Under York's plea agreement, he will serve 15 years in federal prison on the federal charges, with 14 years on the state charges running concurrently. The state sentence requires him to spend an additional 36 years on probation as a sex offender.

York claims immunity as Indian

Defense raises new issues as about 200 show support

Macon Telegraph/July 1, 2003
By Rob Peecher

Cult leader and confessed child molester Malachi York told a federal court judge Monday that he is a sovereign Indian chief and therefore not subject to federal law.

At a hearing to determine whether York would continue to plead guilty to charges involving child molestation and financial reporting fraud, York failed to answer if he plans to withdraw his guilty plea. But he did demand that the court turn him over to his followers who, he said, would try him.

York asserted that he is "Chief Black Eagle" of the "Yamassee" tribe, which he claimed is

recognized by the United Nations. About 200 of York's followers - many wearing what appeared to be American Indian-style clothing and beaded headbands with feathers - gathered in and around the U.S. District Courthouse in Macon during the hearing.

"All I'm asking is that the court recognize that I am an indigenous person," York told Judge Hugh Lawson. "I am a Moorish Cherokee and I cannot get a fair trial if I am being tried by settlers or confederates."

The hearing Monday also gave the defense the opportunity to raise two new issues. York's attorneys asked the judge to grant a psychological evaluation to determine if York is competent; and, presuming York does withdraw his guilty plea, they asked that the trial be moved.

Lawson, who last week rejected York's plea on the grounds that the recommended sentence did not fit the crimes, did not rule on either issue Monday.

The U.S. Attorney's office also announced it plans to re-indict York to add a "forfeiture charge" which might allow the government to seize the 476-acre Putnam County compound that York claims is a "sovereign nation."

York said according to supposed treaties between the government of the United States and his tribe, it is his "inalienable right to be tried by my own people."

York presented documents purportedly signed by Gov. Sonny Perdue as proof that his tribe is recognized by the government. A spokeswoman for the governor, Kimberly King, said last week the document bearing Perdue's signature was "fake."

York is the leader of a cult group known as the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors. The group began in the early 1970s in Brooklyn. Over the years, the group has claimed heritage from or religious links to American Indians, Egyptians, Christians, Jews, Muslims, the Shriners and

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Freemasons. At one point, the Nuwaubians dressed like cowboys and York claimed to be from outer space.

York has told his followers he is an angel, and he has claimed to be a god.

Though he pleaded guilty in January to state charges of molesting 13 children from his group, many of his followers remain loyal to him. There were approximately 50 Nuwaubians inside the courtroom - some who refused to stand as the judge entered or left the courtroom. Outside, there were dozens of Nuwaubians playing drums and waiting. At one point during the hearing, they could be heard inside the courtroom chanting.

Judge Lawson explained at least twice to York that he was rejecting the plea agreement reached in January by York's attorneys and the U.S. Attorney's Office. Under that plea agreement, York would have spent 15 years in prison.

Lawson said he was rejecting the plea agreement for a number of reasons, among them that York's "post-plea behavior" has not indicated that York has accepted his guilt or considered "the impact of the conduct of the defendant on the victims." Lawson also said the 15-year sentence "does not address the severity of the admitted and alleged conduct of the defendant."

After explaining that York likely would receive a stiffer sentence if he continues with his plea of guilty or if he is convicted by a jury, Lawson asked York if he intended to withdraw his plea.

"In all due respect to your court," York responded, "I'm a sovereign. I'm a Native American."

Ed Garland, the attorney representing York, pleaded with Lawson to reconsider his rejection of the 15-year sentence. Garland also asked the judge to indulge him while he read information apparently about York's sovereignty. Lawson asked if it was something Garland was asserting in York's defense.

"It's not a position that I am making a legal argument about, but I have a client who wants to put on the record his position on certain matters," Garland said.

Lawson also asked York's other attorney, Manny Arora, if he believed there was any validity to the assertions York was making, and Lawson threatened Arora with "serious trouble" if he didn't give a direct answer.

"I don't believe, at this point, there is any legal merit," Arora answered.

York said he was "tortured" and "under duress" when he pleaded guilty, and that he had been told by his attorneys he would go to prison for "thousands of years."

When York pleaded guilty in January, Lawson was required to ask York a series of questions to ensure he was voluntarily entering his plea. York said he was voluntarily pleading.

Arora said York has become unwilling to cooperate with his attorneys.

Lawson said he was "unsettled" as to whether or not he would grant the psychological evaluation and would rule on it later, but the U.S. Attorney's office did not object to changing venue.

Lawson told Garland and Arora to be prepared for trial Aug. 4.

York and his followers moved from New York in 1993 to the farm in Putnam County. Since 1998, the group has been at odds with county officials over zoning and building codes, resulting in several lawsuits.

In May 2002, federal authorities and the local sheriff's office raided the group's compound, took five children into protective custody and arrested York at a Milledgeville grocery store. York was charged with numerous state counts of molesting children and charged federally with transporting children across state lines for the purpose of having sex with them.

Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills has been at the forefront of the county's zoning battles with the Nuwaubians and was a key participant in the criminal investigation into the child molestation allegations.

Sills said Monday's hearing was "Mr. York being allowed to make a complete mockery of the criminal justice system, and what you saw today was the first round in a three-ring circus in full Indian headdress."

"Less than a year ago (York) was a Jewish Rabbi," Sills said, "and today they were all dressed like Indians again."

Ex-Sect Leader Rejects Plea, Charges

Associated Press/July 1, 2003

The former leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors told a federal judge Monday that he was under duress when he entered a guilty plea to child molestation charges in January.

Malachi York, who identified himself as "Chief Black Eagle," asked U.S. District Court Judge Hugh Lawson to turn him over to what he called the Yamassee Native American Government, saying the U.S. government had no jurisdiction over him.

Last week, Lawson rejected a plea agreement involving York, 58, who was the leader of the predominantly black, quasi-religious Nuwaubian group based on a 400-acre farm in Putnam County.

On Jan. 23, he pleaded guilty in federal court to one count of transporting children across state lines for the purpose of illegal sex and to one

count of illegally structuring cash transactions. The next day, he pleaded guilty in state court in Putnam County to 77 counts related to child molestation.

As part of the plea bargain, state and federal prosecutors agreed to recommend that York be given a prison sentence that would make him eligible for parole in about 12 years.

Lawson's rejection of the plea means a trial could be necessary.

The two-hour hearing Monday was held to give York a chance to withdraw his guilty plea. The courtroom was full of York's supporters, with almost 300 outside. Many of them wore what appeared to be American Indian-style clothing with beaded headbands and feathers.

Lawson said he would make decisions in the near future on motions by York's lawyers for a change of venue motion and to have a psychological evaluation of the defendant.

"I was under duress," York said of his guilty plea. "I was in a two-man cell -- with rats. After being tortured and being told that I would get 1,000 years, they made it look like a racial issue. I was on the cross.

"I would like to be transferred to members of my tribe," York said.

"All I am asking is that the court recognize that I am an indigenous person," he said. "I am a Moorish Cherokee, and I cannot get a fair trial if I am being tried by settlers or Confederates."

Sect leader's hearing on plea delayed again

A crowd of Nuwaubian leader Dwight York's supporters gather Thursday outside the Federal Courthouse in Macon.

**Athens Banner-Herald/July 11, 2003
By Joe Johnson**

Macon -- Accusations, descriptions of "sex props" and a demand the judge remove himself from the case colored Thursday's federal court hearing for religious sect leader and admitted child molester Dwight "Malachi" York.

Already delayed once by concerns regarding York's mental competency, a hearing in which the former Athens resident will have an opportunity to withdraw a guilty plea has been delayed again by York's motion that the judge remove himself from the case because of alleged bias.

Defense attorney Ed Garland told U.S. District Judge Hugh Lawson he had tainted his appearance of impartiality in the case when he told both sides what prison sentence he would find acceptable should the defense and prosecution agree on a new plea bargain to replace the one Lawson rejected June 25.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie accused York of employing delay tactics in the case that has dragged on since York's arrest on child molestation charges on May 8, 2002.

"The government is concerned by Mr. York making an attempt to impede this trial," Moultrie told Lawson.

Originally from New York City, York led a quasi-religious group called the United

Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, which established a compound in Putnam County where York admittedly molested dozens of children. He had owned a house off Timothy Road in Athens, and his group purchased a storefront in the downtown area.

Because of York's motion for Lawson to recuse himself, a portion of Thursday's 90-minute hearing was spent creating a record of what had been said during an informal meeting in Lawson's chambers on May 28. During that meeting, Lawson indicated to prosecuting and defense attorneys that he would not accept the plea bargain the two sides had struck because the agreed-upon prison sentence of 15 years was "too lenient." After excusing themselves briefly from the judge's chambers, the attorneys then asked Lawson what sentence he would consider fair, to which he replied, 20 years.

Garland told Lawson once he offered that possible prison sentence, he lost his impartiality.

A Nuwaubian supporter drums outside the Federal Courthouse in Macon during Nuwaubian leader Malachi York's hearing Thursday.

"When a judge becomes a participant in the plea bargaining process, he brings the full majesty and power of his office," Garland said. "Your majesty and power has created an impact, and there's a prejudice against the defendant."

Lawson adjourned the hearing without ruling on the motion to recuse himself or any other matters brought before him on Thursday.

Still pending is a motion for a competency examination and hearing requested by York's attorneys on June 30, when they told Lawson their client was unwilling and unable to assist in his defense because he claimed to be a Native American tribal chief who did not recognize the jurisdiction of the federal court.

The mental competency motion put on hold an opportunity Lawson gave York to withdraw his guilty plea in light of the rejection of the plea bargain. The judge had warned York that if he

did not withdraw the guilty plea, he could face a stiffer sentence than what the plea bargain had envisioned.

York had initially been accused by federal authorities of molesting more than a dozen minor girls, some as young as 11, but in the rejected January plea bargain he had pleaded guilty to only one count of transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes. In state court, York had pleaded guilty to 40 counts of aggravated child molestation, 34 counts of child molestation, one count of child exploitation and two counts of influencing witnesses. Sentencing on those charges is on hold until the federal case is disposed of, as his state sentence is to run concurrent with any federal sentence that is imposed.

The other matters brought before Lawson on Thursday included a motion by the defense to suppress certain evidence obtained by the FBI in May 2002 when they searched York's \$528,000 house in Athens and an estate in Eatonton inhabited by followers of York's United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

Defense attorney Manubir Arora told the judge that information used by an FBI agent to obtain search warrants of York's properties in Athens and Eatonton had been "stale," since it came from confidential witnesses who had left York's sect nearly a year and a half before the warrants were obtained.

Reading from the warrants, Arora provided a glimpse into activities that led to York's arrest. The warrants referred to "sex props," including grass skirts purchased during a trip York made with children to Disneyland, and an animal print bean bag on which children posed for pornographic photographs.

Also pending before Lawson is a June 30 motion for a change of venue, to a location where potential jurors would be less likely to be influenced by pre-trial publicity. Lawson has said he would grant the change of venue request, but would first have to decide where a trial would be held.

Lawson adjourned Thursday's hearing without ruling on any of the motions or setting a new hearing date.

York's trial is set to begin Aug. 4.

Originally named Dwight York, the 58-year-old defendant had led a sect in Brooklyn, N.Y., called the Ansaru Allah community, a segregationist religious group which incorporated Muslim traditions. Also claiming to be an extraterrestrial, York relocated followers to Putnam County in 1993, where his United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors established their Eatonton compound. At the corner of West Broad and Church streets in Athens, the group planned on opening a lodge, but later licensed the location as a book store.

York lawyer asks for new judge

The Macon Telegraph/July 11, 2003
By Sharon E. Crawford

A Nuwaubian supporter drums outside the Federal Courthouse in Macon during Nuwaubian leader Malachi York's hearing Thursday.

A defense attorney for religious leader and admitted child molester Malachi York asked a federal judge Thursday to recuse himself from the case, arguing that the judge inadvertently involved himself in plea negotiations.

"This has created an impact and prejudice on the defendant to make decisions" about his case, defense lawyer Ed Garland said. "We say that there has been a participation in the process by the court ... and an appearance of bias can be inferred."

Garland's motion was the latest twist in the case. Last week, York told Lawson he was a

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sovereign Indian chief and therefore not subject to federal law.

As of Thursday, York had not revoked his guilty plea and federal prosecutors were preparing for an Aug. 4 trial. York did not speak to the court Thursday and made only a few comments to his three attorneys.

York pleaded guilty in January to taking children across state lines for the purpose of having sex with them and to evading federal financial reporting requirements. He agreed to a 15-year federal sentence in the case.

In May, Federal Judge Hugh Lawson met with attorneys in the case to tell them he was planning to deny their plea agreement because it didn't call for enough prison time for York.

At that time, Garland, an Atlanta attorney and one of York's defenders, asked Lawson what the judge felt was a proper sentence in the case. Garland said in court Thursday that Lawson said 20 years was more appropriate.

"I know the court did not want to put itself in the plea bargaining process," Garland said. "(Both the defense and the prosecution) played a role into bringing the situation to where it is ... the situation the defendant finds himself in ... is that he has been advised as to what sentence the court feels is appropriate."

U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie said federal officials do not believe Lawson acted inappropriately when responding to Garland's question about sentencing for York. He said Lawson's comment was made long after York entered a guilty plea.

Garland said York could not consider revoking his guilty plea until Lawson rules on the motion to recuse.

Garland also said he felt Lawson made his decision on sentencing after reading an erroneous presentencing report. Lawson told Garland it was common procedure to read the

reports, which are written in all federal cases, before accepting or rejecting a guilty plea.

"One of the curious things about your arguments is the perverted idea that the court is not allowed to base any opinion on the presentencing report, which is an arm of the court," Lawson said.

Thursday, Lawson did not rule on the motion to recuse or another motion to suppress evidence seized by federal and local officials when they searched two of York's residences in Putnam County and in Athens.

U.S. Attorney Max Wood said he expects Lawson to rule on both motions before Aug. 4.

"We are ready to go to trial and will abide by the rulings of the court," Wood said.

In the second motion, the defense asked the court to throw out certain items - everything from pornographic videos to an animal-printed pillow - confiscated in the Nuwaubian complex in Putnam County in May 2002.

Federal prosecutors asked Lawson not to rule on that motion until York revoked his guilty plea. Lawson declined to rule on the motion Thursday, but didn't say when he would make a ruling.

During the hearing, Lawson read an order making public a May 28 meeting in his chamber among all of the lawyers in the case. At the time of the meeting, both the prosecution and the defense said they didn't want the meeting to be part of the court record.

In the meeting, Lawson said both sides asked the court to accept the plea agreement and said a 15-year prison sentence was appropriate. When Lawson refused to accept the agreement, he said, Moultrie offered to drop all but one charge against York in an effort to get a 15-year sentence.

"(The prosecution) said they were concerned that if the plea was rejected, \$400,000 in forfeited items would be lost," Lawson said.

"They also expressed concerns about the emotional trauma and stress a trial would put on the victims in this case who have wanted to put their relationships with the defendant behind them."

Thursday, more than 100 of York's supporters stood outside the U.S. federal court house while the court proceedings were ongoing. Only 30 people, several of them women dressed in Native American-type clothing and hairstyles, were allowed to sit in the courtroom during York's hearing.

Several women smiled when York, who was dressed in an orange prison jumpsuit and shackled at the hands and feet, walked in the courtroom. After the proceedings, the same women blew kisses at the defendant as he was escorted out of the room by six federal agents.

Outside, federal and state law enforcement officers walked alongside other York supporters as they played the drums and chanted songs.

Also Thursday, Garland introduced south Florida attorney Frank Rubino as the newest member of York's defense team. Rubino, who did not speak in Thursday's hearing, was the lead defense attorney for former Panamanian strongman Gen. Manuel Noriega.

York, who has been the leader of a cult group since the 1970s, and a group of his supporters moved to a 476-acre farm in Putnam County in 1993 from New York.

At various times, members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors have claimed to be Egyptians, space aliens and Native Americans and connected to various religious groups, including Christians, Jews and Muslims.

Judge order York competency test

Macon Telegraph/July 15, 2003
By Rob Peecher

A judge issued an order Monday requiring confessed child molester Malachi York to undergo a psychological evaluation at a federal facility, U.S. Attorney Max Wood confirmed.

The evaluation likely will delay the start of York's trial, tentatively set for early next month, said Wood.

"I can't imagine us being ready for trial - getting (the psychological examination) completed by Aug. 4," he said.

U.S. District Judge Hugh Lawson's order had not been filed Monday in the U.S. District Courthouse in Macon. Wood said he was aware of the order but had not seen it.

York's attorney, Manny Arora, also had not seen the order late Monday afternoon. He said the defense had asked for an evaluation to determine York's competency to understand the process of his federal criminal case.

"This is not an insanity issue - this is simply to make sure he understands the proceedings," Arora said. "The trial cannot go forward until he is deemed to be competent."

York pleaded guilty in January to 77 state counts dealing almost entirely with child sex abuse charges and two federal counts involving taking children across state lines for the purpose of having sex with them and avoiding federal financial reporting requirements.

York has not withdrawn his guilty pleas in either the state or federal charges, but Lawson rejected the 15-year prison sentence agreed to during plea negotiations between the U.S. Attorney's Office and York's lawyers.

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Lawson said if York follows through with the guilty plea, he likely will be sentenced to serve 20 years in prison, rather than 15.

Lawson also told both sides to be ready for trial Aug. 4 in the event that York withdraws his plea.

York's attorneys have reported to the judge that he has been uncooperative with them, and during a hearing in June, York told the judge he was a sovereign American Indians, not subject to the federal laws. York demanded that he be turned over to his "tribe" for trial.

"I think he's hanging his hat on something that, unfortunately - as the judge asked us - doesn't have any legal basis," Arora said.

Arora noted that federal law does provide special considerations for American Indians in some civil law, but American Indians are still subject to criminal law. Also, York appears to be relying on a forged document purporting to be signed by Gov. Sonny Perdue as proof that he is an American Indian.

Arora said York was initially uncooperative when a court-appointed psychologist attempted to interview him July 4, but did cooperate during a second interview July 7. He said he has not received the results of that interview.

Wood declined to comment on York's competency.

York, the leader of the cult-like group, the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, moved from New York to a 476-acre farm in Putnam County in 1993. Just prior to that move, York and his followers were living on a camp in the Catskill Mountains where they had erected at least one tepee and were claiming American Indian heritage.

York, at the time, referred to himself as Chief Black Eagle, and followers still loyal to him recently have reverted back to that name. During two recent hearings in Macon, Nuwaubians have

attended wearing American Indian-style clothing and beaded headdresses with feathers.

Since coming to Putnam County, though, the group has claimed ancestry from ancient Egyptians. The group also has claimed to be Muslim, Jewish and Christian. York claimed to be from another planet and has told his followers he is an angel. The group also has claimed to be affiliated with Freemasons.

In 1998, Putnam County and the Nuwaubians began a public court battle, mostly over zoning violations, that lasted until just before York's arrest by federal and local authorities in May 2002.

Late Monday, York was still being held in the Jones County Jail. It was unclear what federal facility he will be sent to. Arora guessed the evaluation will last 30 to 45 days.

Attorney: York competent to stand trial

**York's attorneys file motion asking
judge to rescind order**

**Macon Telegraph/July 17, 2003
By Rob Peecher**

Two days after a federal judge ordered confessed child molester Malachi York to undergo a psychiatric evaluation, his attorneys filed a motion asking the judge to rescind that order.

The motion filed Wednesday seeks to assure the judge that York, the leader of the cult-like group the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, is competent to stand trial, willing to cooperate with his attorneys and does not want the

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psychiatric evaluation. Frank Rubino, the newest member of York's defense team, filed the motion.

"This attorney spent approximately two hours with Mr. York, and at all times Mr. York was coherent, logical, helpful and eager to aid in the preparation of his case," Rubino wrote in the motion. "It was clear that Mr. York could appreciate the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him."

U.S. District Judge Hugh Lawson ordered Monday that York be transferred to the custody of the federal Bureau of Prisons to be evaluated to determine his competency to stand trial. The order was based on a motion filed by York's lawyers Ed Garland and Manny Arora and on the results of a brief psychiatric evaluation conducted earlier this month.

York pleaded guilty in January to state and federal charges of child molestation.

According to an agreement between prosecutors and York's attorneys, York was to serve 15 years in prison. But Lawson rejected the plea agreement and said he would sentence York to at least 20 years.

In June, York told Lawson during a hearing that he is an American Indian and sovereign, and therefore not subject to federal law. He also argued audibly with his attorneys. It was during that hearing that Garland and Arora asked for the competency evaluation. Rubino was not yet representing York at that time.

Rubino said Wednesday that York is now cooperating, and the defense no longer thinks there is a need for a psychiatric evaluation.

"The client has now come around. He's being helpful, he appears lucid, he appears fine," Rubino said. "He was not cooperating. He was basically stonewalling (his attorneys), but now he's come around, and it has become a moot issue as far as we're concerned."

Rubino said his involvement in the case might have been what made York decide to start cooperating with his attorneys because "sometimes it takes a fresh face to stimulate the client and get things back on track."

As of Wednesday, no hearing had been scheduled on the new motion, though Lawson could rule on it without a hearing, Rubino said.

York has yet to decide whether to withdraw his guilty plea to federal charges of transporting minors across state lines for the purpose of having sex with them and attempting to evade federal financial reporting requirements. He also has not withdrawn a guilty plea to 77 state counts of child molestation.

Alleged victim seeks \$1 billion from Nuwaubian leader

Associated Press Athens Banner-Herald/July 18, 2003
By Daniel E. Martin

Attorneys have filed a civil lawsuit against the quasi-religious sect leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors on behalf of one of his alleged underage victims who claims he sexually molested her.

The suit, filed last year in the U.S. District Court in Athens, seeks \$1 billion from confessed child molester Malachi York.

I don't know if I have the words to describe the revulsion I feel at the conduct of Mr. York toward our client, attorney Irwin W. Stolz Jr. told the Athens Banner-Herald in its Thursday editions.

The suit alleges that a female member of the Nuwaubian sect recruited the victim to be apart of the groups inner circle. York then showed the victims a pornographic video and later had sex with her. The alleged actions took place from the time the girl was 11 years old until she was 17.

Stolz said a judge could triple the award damages if a jury rules in favor of his client because he said York's actions fall under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act.

York, 58, pleaded guilty in January to taking children across state lines for the purpose of having sex with them and to evading federal financial reporting requirements.

His attorney, Manny Arora, declined to comment on the civil suit pending the outcome of the criminal proceedings.

Judge recuses himself from York's trial

Macon Telegraph/July 22, 2003
By Rob Peecher

The judge hearing the case of cult leader and confessed child molester Malachi York has stepped aside at the request of York's lawyers.

In an order filed late last Friday, U.S. District Court Judge Hugh Lawson recused himself from the case.

Lawson rejected a plea agreement reached between the U.S. Attorney's Office and the defense, and his decision opens the door again for York's guilty plea to go through.

In January, York pleaded guilty in both federal and state courts to numerous charges involving child molestation. In June, Lawson rejected York's deal with federal prosecutors, after telling lawyers in the case that he thought the proposed 15-year sentence was too lenient.

Early this month, York's lawyers asked Lawson to remove himself from the case, arguing that he had interfered in the plea-bargain process by stating what he thought would be an appropriate sentence.

Both guilty pleas still stand, though York has the opportunity to withdraw the plea because Lawson rejected the plea agreement.

Manny Arora, one of York's defense attorneys, said Monday that the defense will ask the new judge to accept that plea.

"We're not sure who the new judge is or anything about him," Arora said. "We will also ask this judge to accept the plea as it was negotiated, but the U.S. Attorney may have a different point of view, and the new judge,

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obviously, has to make his own decision as to whether he will accept this plea or not."

U.S. Attorney Max Wood declined to comment on whether the government would oppose the guilty plea. However, there have been two hearings since Lawson first rejected the plea agreement, and York has not withdrawn his guilty plea at either.

According to the plea agreement, York would have spent 15 years in a federal prison. A 15-year negotiated state sentence was to run concurrent with the federal sentence. In his order recusing himself, Lawson said he rejected the plea agreement in May because he thought York should serve at least 20 years in prison.

May 28, Lawson "met with counsel for the government and counsel for the defendant for the purpose of advising them that the court had decided to reject the plea agreement previously negotiated by the government and the defendant," Lawson wrote in his order. "The court explained that after consideration ... the court had come to the conclusion that the 15-year sentence to be imposed under the plea agreement was too lenient."

According to the order, Lawson then "indicated that a sentence of 20 years might be acceptable."

July 10, York's lawyers Ed Garland and Arora argued that Lawson had improperly participated in the negotiations and asked that the judge remove himself from the case. Last Friday, Lawson signed the order doing just that.

The U.S. district clerk of court's office will be responsible for appointing a new judge to the case, but Wood said he didn't know how long that would take.

"The ruling doesn't change anything we're doing," Wood said. "We're preparing for trial. We have many excellent judges in our district, and we'll be ready for trial whoever the judge is, wherever the trial is and whenever the trial is."

May 8, 2002, federal agents arrested York in the parking lot of a Milledgeville grocery store. Simultaneously, FBI SWAT teams and local sheriff's deputies raided the 476-acre farm in Putnam County where York and his followers, the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, were based. Federal agents also raided York's home in Athens.

The arrest was the culmination of months of investigation by the Putnam County Sheriff's Office and the FBI into allegations by the children of members of his group that York had molested them.

Just before the trial on a 208-count state indictment was to begin in early February, York pleaded guilty to two federal counts of transporting children across state lines for the purpose of having sex with them and for attempting to evade financial reporting requirements. He also pleaded guilty to 77 state charges mostly consisting of child molestation and aggravated child molestation.

Since Lawson rejected York's plea agreement, two hearings have been held at the federal courthouse in Macon. Both hearings were notable for the number of York's supporters who attended. More than 250 Nuwaubians attended the first hearing in late June, and about 150 attended the hearing earlier this month.

During the June hearing, York asserted that he is an American Indian, "a sovereign" not subject to federal law. He argued with his attorneys and told a judge that according to United Nations treaties he should be turned over to his "tribe" for trial.

York and his followers moved to Putnam County from New York in 1993. Beginning in 1998, York and the Nuwaubians have been involved in a court battle with Putnam County officials over zoning violations.

The Nuwaubian compound, at 404 Shady Dale Road, features two pyramids, a sphinx and other Egyptian-style statues and building facades.

Government seeks York's money, properties

Macon Telegraph/July 23, 2003

By Rob Peecher

Eatonton -- The U.S. Attorney's office in Macon has filed a civil suit seeking the forfeiture of money and property from cult leader Malachi York.

The property includes the 476-acre Putnam County compound where York and his followers, the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, erected pyramids, a sphinx and other Egyptian-style statues. The government also wants York's home that is in an upscale Athens neighborhood. York's followers refer to the home as "the mansion."

Also, U.S. District Court Judge Ashley Royal will preside over York's federal criminal case after Judge Hugh Lawson recused himself, according to the federal clerk of court's office.

Lawson had rejected a negotiated plea agreement between the government and York's defense team because he believed the 15-year negotiated sentence was too lenient. One of York's attorneys said this week that the defense is hopeful that Royal will accept the negotiated plea.

In addition to the two properties being sought through the civil suit, the government is also seeking the forfeiture of \$430,000 seized by federal agents who raided the compound and York's Athens home when he was arrested in May of 2002.

U.S. Attorney Max Wood said Tuesday that when Lawson rejected the negotiated plea the government effectively lost the \$430,000 which York had forfeited as part of the plea. The civil

suit seeks to allow the government to regain that money and adds the two properties.

"What we're doing is we filed a civil action, a forfeiture action, against the money seized back in May of 2002 and against the property, and that is a result of the plea being rejected by Judge Lawson," Wood said.

Though York was for several years the sole owner of the property in Putnam County, shortly before his arrest he deeded the property to three members of his group: Ethel Richardson, Anthony Evans and Patrice Evans. To take the property, the government will have to prove that York effectively maintained control of the property and conducted criminal activity there.

"We have a burden of proving that criminal activity was associated with that property," Wood said.

The three people who hold title to the land "would be entitled to respond to any forfeiture complaint we filed," Wood said.

The government has maintained possession of the cash since it was seized during York's arrest and during the raids on the two properties, and will hold it while it is still subject to civil litigation.

After his arrest, York was indicted by a federal grand jury and a Putnam County grand jury. In January, just before the trial was to begin on the state charges, York pleaded guilty in federal court to one count of attempting to evade federal financial reporting requirements and one count of transporting minors across state lines for the purpose of having sex with them. He then pleaded guilty to 77 state charges mostly involving child molestation and aggravated child molestation.

Former Nuwaubian says leader abused her for years

Innocence lost during life in sect

OnlineAthens/July 26, 2003

By Joe Johnson

Orlando, Fla. -- A spaceship from another universe would be arriving to save her from the coming apocalyptic destruction of life on Earth.

The price for this 11-year-old girl's ticket to safety was nothing less than the theft of her childhood, innocence and faith.

They were allegedly stolen by Dwight "Malachi" York, leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a religious sect to which the girl, her mother and younger sister belonged. Membership for the girl meant years of alleged sexual abuse at the hands of York and a Spartan existence at the sect's Putnam County compound, devoid of the normal pleasures of childhood.

She can never regain what has been stolen from her, but the now-18-year-old woman is seeking at least \$1 billion in damages from York in a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Athens. The lawsuit alleges York molested her from the time she was 11 until she was 17, on properties York owns in both Athens and near the Putnam County town of Eatonton.

Known by York's followers simply as "The Land," the 476-acre Putnam County compound was not only where Nuwaubians lived, it served as headquarters for a large business enterprise. The compound resembles an Egyptian theme park, with large pyramids and an entrance gate covered with hieroglyphics.

From the compound, Nuwaubians sold various books - including York's version of the Bible, "The Holy Tablets," at \$300 per copy - along with incense, coloring books, audio tapes, pens and pencils and even a lifelike Malachi York doll.

The woman who filed suit against York is one of several victims who assisted investigations which led to York's arrest on state and federal child molestation charges. As a result, she said she fears retribution from York's still-stalwart legion of supporters. As a condition of her interview with the Athens Banner-Herald she requested she be identified as "Stacey," not her real name.

She now holds in contempt the man she once revered and said her time spent at the Putnam County compound is a nightmare she would like to forget.

Inside the compound

Life at the Putnam County compound as described by Stacey was highly regimented and seemed to be more of a combination boot camp and sweat shop than a religious retreat.

Children, boys and girls alike, were made to look the same by having close-cropped Afro-style haircuts and wearing white United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors T-shirts. They were awakened early in the morning to do chores and were led into the woods for calisthenics. They were called to prayer three times a day and made to memorize York's quasi-religious writings.

Children at the compound were separated from their parents, and Stacey said the only time she saw her mother was when they encountered each other in York's business office. The Nuwaubians were segregated at the compound by age and gender. Stacey lived in one of eight houses there with other girls her age.

"I hated everything about it - it was like being in a prison without gates," Stacey said. "At times you'd be lucky to make a plate because so many people would be eating and there was so little

Nuwaubians in the News

food. And you got tired of eating the same nasty stuff every day. If you got meat, you were lucky."

Even the adults were tightly controlled, according to Stacey, who said that upon joining the Nuwaubians they turned over their worldly possessions to York, including cars, titles to homes and bank accounts. He dictated where they lived and when they could leave and re-enter the compound. The men could not have relations with, or even talk to, the women without York's permission.

There were more than 20 people living in each house, with double bunkbeds placed in nearly every room, including the dining rooms and living rooms, Stacey said.

Because Stacey was one of York's chosen few, her chores involved working exclusively in the Nuwaubian leader's residence, which she cleaned daily. York's office was also in his residence, and Stacey was put to work there learning computer skills to assist in York's business enterprise. "I didn't get to play with the other kids," Stacey said. "I had to stay in his house all day. I hated it. But if I said I wanted to leave, where was I going to go? There's nothing but miles of trees and woods with animals, and I don't know Georgia."

'Something wonderful'

Like York, Stacey originally came from New York City. She, her mother and a younger sister were among hundreds of Nuwaubians who moved to the compound when York bought the Putnam County property in 1993.

Stacey said after working in York's house for a period of time, and after she turned 11, an adult member of the Nuwaubian leader's "inner circle" informed her "something wonderful" was going to happen that would have "deep significance for her spiritual development."

After eating a meal prepared specially for her at York's home one evening, Stacey was instructed

by the woman to go upstairs to take a bath that had been drawn for her.

"So I bathed," Stacey said. "Then I heard (York's) voice say, 'Come in,' and so I followed the voice into his bedroom and then it happened.

"He told me not to be scared, that it's going to hurt a little, but it hurt a whole damn lot."

Stacey said York eventually told her the reason she had been summoned to his bed.

"The first time he didn't explain," she said. "I mean, it was late and I was kind of scared - I mean I was really scared because I didn't know what was going on. But after awhile he explained the religion, that I had a purpose there and all this crappy stuff," Stacey said. "He told me not to tell anyone, that it was a secret. At first I thought it was a privilege because it was such a big secret, but when I saw he was doing the same thing with other girls, so what makes it such a privilege? After a while I just felt like I was a prisoner in that place and couldn't get out."

What sustained her during the years of sexual abuse was a form of dissociation.

"It's like you're somewhere, but you're not really there, you know?" Stacey said. "You're just there for the moment, doing whatever, because that's what you have to do."

Stacey said while she was at the compound there were at least five other girls York favored, and they were all told that before the apocalypse came, they would be among the 144,000 believers who would be spirited away to safety by the mother ship from the planet Rizq from the galaxy Illyuwn.

"I've never seen an alien, but they drill it into you so much that you actually start believing in them," Stacey said.

Breaking away

Nuwaubians in the News

In addition to the Putnam County property, York in 1998 bought a \$528,000 mansion on Mansfield Drive in Athens, where Stacey said she was sometimes taken for more sexual abuse.

It was at about that time she began to rebel against York's authority, coming to see that York expected her to act like an adult in his bedroom, yet he treated her like a child the remainder of the time.

"You're told that you have to do certain things, and so you feel if you do the same things they do, why can't I do everything that they do?" Stacey said.

It was while in Athens that Stacey began planning her break from the Nuwaubians, despite the fear tactics York used to keep her there, including a prediction she would be raped and murdered if she left.

"They would take me out to the stores in Athens, and I'd see all the college kids and stuff, so I'm like, 'Damn, I want to do that one day,' " Stacey said. "I mean, I don't always want to walk around bald and looking like a freak."

Upon being sent back to the Putnam County compound in 1999, Stacey called her father in New York and asked him to get her. He did, but it wasn't until the next year that Stacey confided in a sister about the sexual abuse she had endured. When the sister told their father, he in turn contacted authorities.

York was arrested in May 2002 on state and federal charges. He has since pleaded guilty to 74 state counts of child molestation, and as part of a plea agreement pleaded guilty to a single federal count of transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes. The plea bargain was rejected by a U.S. District Court judge earlier this month, and a trial on the federal charges is scheduled to begin Aug. 4.

Sentencing on the state charges is on hold because the sentence is to run concurrent with any federal sentence that is imposed.

Trying to survive

Stacey, who now lives with family in Florida, graduated from high school in May and hopes to one day attend law school. She said she became interested in law while doing legal research for York when Putnam County officials began conducting inspections of the Nuwaubian compound.

In the meantime, she said, it is a daily struggle to get her life on an even keel - socially, emotionally and spiritually.

"I find it hard to believe in anything because I just think everything is bull-- now - excuse my French," Stacey said. "You come from where you see people make up stuff, so it makes you wonder, 'Does everybody else do it?' It's hard for me to be religious. I don't know where my faith actually lies."

She said she continues to have "problems" with her family, because "we just don't really know each other."

Stacey has also had problems maintaining a relationship with a boyfriend because her Nuwaubian experience left her with trust issues, and she found herself asking, "What's he in it for - what does he want from me?"

In short, Stacey is trying to adjust to living the life of a normal young adult.

"There's a lot of catching up I've got to do," she said. "So right now, I'm just doing what I have to do to try to survive. Things are a little rough, but I'm trying to make it."

New judge in sect leader's trial

Ex-UGA law prof to hear case

**Athens Banner-Herald/July 26, 2003
By Joe Johnson**

A former University of Georgia law professor has been appointed the new judge in the trial of religious sect leader and admitted child molester Dwight "Malachi" York.

U.S. District Court Judge C. Ashley Royal replaces Judge Hugh Lawson, who recused himself July 18 on a motion by York's attorneys claiming Lawson was not impartial to their client's case.

They said Lawson had inadvertently become a participant in plea bargain discussions when he told defense attorneys and prosecutors that he would accept a recommendation for a 20-year prison sentence as part of a plea agreement.

Lawson had rejected an earlier plea agreement because it had called for a 15-year prison sentence, which the judge called "too lenient."

York, 58, is leader of a religious sect called the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors. He was accused by federal authorities in May 2002 of molesting more than a dozen minor girls, some as young as 11, but as part of the plea bargain later rejected by Lawson he pleaded guilty to a single count of transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes.

In addition to the federal charges, York has pleaded guilty in state court to 74 counts of child molestation, one count of child exploitation and two counts of influencing witnesses. Sentencing in state court is on hold until the federal case is disposed of, as his sentence is to run concurrent with any federal sentence that is imposed.

With the rejection of the plea bargain, York has the option of withdrawing his guilty plea and take his chances with a jury, or attempt to strike a new agreement with prosecutors.

York's trial is scheduled to begin Aug. 4.

York owns a home off Timothy Road in Athens, and his sect bought a storefront on West Broad Street it intended to turn into a lodge and book store. The Nuwaubians also have a 476-acre compound in Eatonton. Prosecutors allege child molestations occurred in both Eatonton and Athens.

Royal not only taught at the Athens-based university, but he graduated from the Georgia University School of Law in 1974. President Bush appointed him judge for the Middle District of Georgia in October 2001, and the appointment was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in December of that year.

York federal trial delayed

**Athens Banner-Herald/July 29, 2003
By Joe Johnson**

The scheduled Aug. 4 start of the federal trial of religious sect leader and admitted child molester Dwight "Malachi" York has been postponed due to the recent replacement of the trial judge.

U.S. District Judge C. Ashley Royal last week replaced Judge Hugh Lawson after York's attorneys claimed Lawson had lost his impartiality in the case. A new trial date had not been set as of Monday.

"We have no information at this time as to when the trial will begin," said Pamela Lightsey, spokeswoman for U.S. Department of Justice's Middle District of Georgia.

York, 58, is leader of a religious sect called the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

He pleaded guilty to 74 state counts of child molestation and other related charges, and as part of an agreement with federal prosecutors had pleaded guilty to a single count of transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes.

Lawson last month rejected the plea agreement on the grounds the 15-year prison sentence it included had been "too lenient." Soon after, York's attorneys filed a motion requesting Lawson to recuse himself from the case because he had inadvertently become a participant in the plea-bargaining process when he stated he would accept a plea agreement that included a 20-year prison sentence.

Lawson granted that motion, and he was replaced last week with Royal, a former University of Georgia law professor and school alumnus.

Upon his assignment to the case, Royal inherited several pending motions, which he may or may not choose to rule on.

"Judge Royal is taking the case as it exists, so he could have a hearing on the motions or not, and he can rule on the motions or not," Lightsey said.

Lightsey said it was her understanding that Royal could also overrule decisions Lawson had made on previous motions.

Among the pending motions are requests by the defense to suppress evidence, including certain items removed during searches of York's properties in Putnam and Athens-Clarke counties.

York in 1993 bought 476 acres in Eatonton, which was turned into a compound that housed more than 150 Nuwaubians and was headquarters for a sect-related business enterprise. York bought a mansion on Mansfield Court in Athens in 1998.

Also pending is a defense motion for a change of venue to a location where potential jurors would be less likely to be influenced by pre-trial publicity.

Nuwaubian sect leader will undergo psychological evaluation

Athens Banner-Herald/August 13, 2003

By Joe Johnson

Religious sect leader and admitted child molester Dwight "Malachi" York is to be transferred this week from a Georgia county jail to a federal penitentiary where he will undergo psychological testing to determine his fitness to stand trial, York's defense attorney said Tuesday.

Atlanta attorney Manubir Arora said exactly where his client will be examined was unknown as of Tuesday, but a likely place would be the Butner Federal Correctional Institution in Butner, N.C.

"This is something that will be determined by the (U.S.) Marshal Service," Arora said.

The evaluation of the former Athens resident's competency is to be performed under the order of the new judge in York's case, U.S. District Court Judge C. Ashley Royal, who denied York's recent motion to void an earlier order for a psychological exam made by Royal's predecessor.

U.S. District Court Judge Hugh Lawson recused himself from the case July 18, after York's defense team alleged Lawson had lost his

impartiality by becoming an unwitting participant in plea-bargain negotiations.

York had already undergone one court-ordered psychological exam, which raised questions about his mental competency, and further evaluation was ordered by Lawson following the judge's June 25 rejection of a plea bargain York had made with federal prosecutors.

York, 58, is leader of a religious sect called the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, and prosecutors allege that under the guise of spiritual leader and deity, he sexually abused the underage children of his followers at the Nuwaubian compound in Eatonton and at York's mansion on Mansfield Court in Athens.

York pleaded guilty to 74 state counts of child molestation and other related charges, and as part of an agreement with federal prosecutors had pleaded guilty to a single count of transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes in return for a recommendation he serve 15 years in prison.

In rejecting the federal plea agreement, Lawson said 15 years in prison would be too lenient a penalty for York. He told attorneys he would agree to a 20-year prison sentence, which prompted the defense's motion for Lawson to recuse himself.

Suddenly faced with the prospect of a trial, York's attorneys asked Lawson for another psychiatric examination because they said York was unable to assist in his own defense, claiming he was a native American tribal chief over whom U.S. courts held no jurisdiction.

Two days after Lawson granted the motion, a new addition to York's defense team filed a motion asking Lawson to rescind his order for the psychiatric exam. Miami attorney Frank Rubino claimed in the motion that after spending two hours with his new client, he determined York was able to assist in his own defense.

In denying Rubino's motion, Royal said he was relying on the report that resulted from York's first examination.

"Because (the) report provides reasonable cause for the court to believe (York) may presently be suffering from a mental disease or defect rendering him mentally incompetent to the extent that he is unable to "understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him or to assist properly in his defense, the court will proceed on its own motion for determination of (York's) mental competency," Royal wrote in his July 24 order.

York had been scheduled to begin trial Aug. 4, but the trial has been delayed indefinitely because of the change of judges and the pending psychological examination.

Religious sect leader's wife denied access to son

Athens Banner-Herald/August 14, 2003

Eatonton -- A judge has denied a request by the wife of United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors leader Malachi York to see her son, who is an alleged victim in the child molestation case against York.

Kathy Johnson, 34, was arrested in May 2002 and implicated in federal and state charges of child molestation involving at least 13 children, including her son.

Authorities allege that Johnson knowingly allowed York to have sex with her son, who is now in state custody.

Johnson has pleaded guilty to a federal charge of failing to report a crime, but the state case against her is on hold while she appeals on grounds that she was denied a speedy trial.

In Tuesday's hearing before Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Superior Court Judge William A. Prior, Putnam County Assistant District Attorney Dawn Baskin "argued against Johnson's request, saying Johnson's son is "the one witness against her who she has the most control over."

The Nuwaubians, a quasi-religious group based on a 400-acre farm in Eatonton, claim their leader, York, is an extraterrestrial. According to one of his defense attorneys, York was to have been transferred this week from the Jones County Jail to an undisclosed federal penitentiary where he will undergo psychological testing to determine his fitness to stand trial.

His trial on federal child molestation charges in U.S. District Court in Macon was to have begun Aug. 4, but it has been put on hold indefinitely until the exam is completed and a hearing is held on its results.

York, 58, allegedly molested the underage children of his followers at the Nuwaubian compound in Eatonton and at his mansion on Mansfield Court in Athens.

York pleaded guilty to 74 state counts of child molestation and other related charges, and as part of an agreement" with federal prosecutors had pleaded guilty to a single count of transporting "children across state lines for sexual purposes in return for a recommendation he serve 15 years in prison.

In rejecting the agreement in June, U.S. District Judge High Lawson said 15 years in prison would be too lenient a penalty for York.

Suddenly faced with the prospect of a trial, York's attorneys asked Lawson for a psychiatric examination because they said York was unable to assist in his own defense, claiming he was a

Native American tribal chief over whom U.S. courts held no jurisdiction.

Religious sect leader's trial date set for January

Molestation case

Athens Banner-Herald/September 10, 2003

By Joe Johnson

The long-delayed trial of religious sect leader and admitted child molester Dwight "Malachi" York has been set to begin Jan. 5 in federal court.

Originally scheduled to start Aug. 4 in U.S. District Court in Macon, York's law-yers had requested a a new trial date because they said they needed more time to prepare in light of court-ordered psychiatric testing that is being done on their client.

York was transferred last month from a Georgia county jail to a federal penitentiary in order to undergo the testing to determine his fitness to stand trial.

The evaluation of the former Athens resident's competency is being done under the order of the new judge in York's case, U.S. District Court Judge C. Ashley Royal, who denied York's recent motion to void an earlier order for a psychiatric exam made by Royal's predecessor.

U.S. District Court Judge Hugh Lawson recused himself from the case July 18, after York's defense team alleged Lawson had lost his impartiality by becoming an unwitting participant in plea-bargain negotiations.

York had already undergone one court-ordered exam, which raised questions about his mental competency, and further evaluation was ordered by Lawson following the judge's June 25 rejection of a plea bargain York had made with federal prosecutors.

York, 58, is leader of a religious sect called the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, and prosecutors allege that under the guise of spiritual leader and deity, he sexually abused the underage children of his followers at the Nuwaubian compound in Eatonton and at York's mansion on Mansfield Court in Athens. York pleaded guilty to 74 state counts of child molestation and other related charges, and as part of an agreement with federal prosecutors had pleaded guilty to a single count of transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes in return for a recommendation he serve 15 years in prison.

In rejecting the federal plea agreement, Lawson said 15 years in prison would be too lenient a penalty for York. He told attorneys he would agree to a 20-year prison sentence, which prompted the defense's motion for Lawson to recuse himself.

Suddenly faced with the prospect of a trial, York's attorneys asked Lawson for another psychiatric examination because they said York was unable to assist in his own defense, as he told the attorneys he was a Native American tribal chief over whom U.S. courts held no jurisdiction.

Two days after Lawson granted the motion, a new addition to York's defense team filed a motion asking Lawson to rescind his order for the psychiatric exam. Miami attorney Frank Rubino claimed in the motion that after spending two hours with his new client, he determined York was able to assist in his own defense.

In denying the motion, Royal said he was relying on the report that resulted from York's first examination, which concluded that York was possibly suffering from a "mental disease or

defect" that could render him incompetent to stand trial.

Nuwaubian Sect Linked to Fake Checks

WXIA-TV 11 Alive/October 2, 2003

Three members tied to a controversial Nuwaubian Nation religious sect are being charged with forging fake certified checks to purchase two homes in Stone Mountain, Ga.

DeKalb County police claim the men planned to use the checks to buy new land to reestablish a home base for the Yamassee Nuwaubian Mour/Moore Tribal Community. Their actions would have defrauded the U.S. Postal Service and John Wills Homes, which owns the Bibb County property.

Police said the men -- William Carroll, also known as "Nayyaa Rafl El," Robert C. Dukes, also known as "Nayya Elisha EL" and Darius Sampson, also known as "KhuFu" -- used documents in the form of certified checks that they created called "certified tender of payment certificate" and "statement of assignment in accounts."

The allegedly fraudulent checks were created after Carroll filed a lien for \$283,900,000 with the Clerk of Superior Court in DeKalb County against the U.S. Postal Service payroll bank account/assets and real property.

An investigation revealed that two of the suspects are post office employees. Police have not specified which two they are.

All three men are charged with theft by deception and identity fraud, police said.

The trio is believed to be affiliated with the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors in Putnam County, which was raided last year on suspicions of minors being transported across state lines for sex. Police arrested the group's leader -- 36-year-old took Dwight D. York -- and his longtime associate, 33-year-old Kathy Johnson.

Three accused of scheme to establish Nuwaubian base

Associated Press/October 3, 2003

Decatur, GA -- Three men have been accused of using a DeKalb County real estate scheme to re-establish a base for the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors sect in middle Georgia.

Police said the men created phony certified checks to try to buy two homes in a subdivision north of Stone Mountain, and one filed a lien against the U.S. Postal Service for \$283.9 million.

Their goal, police said, was to raise money to buy land in Bibb County for the Nuwaubians, who lived on a 476-acre compound in Putnam County before their leader was jailed on federal and state child molestation charges last year.

Charged with criminal attempt were Robert C. Dukes, 52, of south Fulton County, and Darius Sampson, 40, and William Carroll, 48, both of Stone Mountain. Carroll was also charged with identity fraud.

Dwight Malachi York, 58, the sects leader, pleaded guilty on Jan. 23 to 74 state counts of child molestation and other related charges. He pleaded guilty in an agreement with prosecutors to a single count of transporting children across

state lines for sexual purposes in return for a recommendation he serve 15 years in prison.

On June 25, U.S. District Court Judge Hugh Lawson rejected the plea bargain, saying 15 years in prison would be too lenient. He told attorneys he would agree to a 20-year prison sentence, which prompted the defenses motion for Lawson to recuse himself.

Lawson did and the case must now go to trial.

Three Nuwaubian associates arrested in fraud case

Macon Telegraph/October 4, 2003
By Rob Peecher

Three men associated with the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, an embattled religious sect based in Eatonton, were arrested last week in DeKalb County after, police said, they tried to fraudulently buy two houses in Stone Mountain.

The men reportedly planned to sell the homes and turn the money over to the Nuwaubians to purchase 200 acres in Bibb County for a "rebirth" of the Nuwaubian Nation, said Sgt. K.K. Jones of DeKalb County Police Department's fraud unit.

"They submitted paperwork to a sales agent for the property," Jones said. "The sales agent submitted that to the bank, and it came back that the documents didn't have any true financial value to them."

The documents were "certified tenders that were tied to a lien they put on the (U.S.) Postal Service" for \$283 million, Jones said.

Nuwaubians in the News

One of the men, William Carroll, who is also known as Nayya Rafl El, had been fired from his job with the postal service in 1991. He was reinstated in 1999 after a judge determined the postal service didn't let him know he could appeal the firing.

"They had to reinstate him with back pay," Jones said. "He connected in with the Nuwaubians, and they told him the judge gave him a settlement."

According to Jones' description of events, Carroll utilized what is known as "common law," a system of law employed by anti-government militias that relies on what is called "voluntary contracts." In 1999, members of the Nuwaubian Nation began filing common law complaints against government officials, law enforcement officers, judges and members of the media.

Jones said Carroll made an offer of voluntary contract to the postal service for \$283 million and then through the DeKalb County Clerk of Court filed a lien against the post office's payroll account, assets and real property.

Using documents they created based on this \$283 million post office lien, the three men attempted to buy the houses in Stone Mountain, Jones said.

The other two men arrested in the case are Robert C. Dukes, who is also known as Nayya Elisha Isra EL, and Darius Sampson, who also goes by the name KhuFu. All three have been charged with theft by deception and identity fraud.

Jones said the men have admitted to being members of the Nuwaubian Nation, and said they were going to use money from selling the Stone Mountain houses to buy 200 acres in Bibb County, where they planned to support a "rebirth" of the Nuwaubian Nation.

Jones said he anticipates more arrests.

The Nuwaubian group has dwindled from what was once a membership in the thousands to an estimated few hundred since leader Malachi York was arrested in May 2002 and charged with state and federal counts of molesting children.

In January, just before he was scheduled to go to trial, York pleaded guilty to state and federal charges and the plea agreement would have put him in federal prison for 15 years.

But this summer, U.S. District Judge Hugh Thompson rejected the plea agreement, opening the door for York to withdraw his guilty plea. Thompson has since recused himself from the case.

York is currently in a court-ordered psychiatric evaluation in New York, and U.S. District Judge Ashley Royal, who is now the judge in the case, has scheduled the trial to begin after the first of the year.

York has not withdrawn his guilty plea on the state or federal charges, but did say in open court that he was coerced into pleading guilty.

York has claimed that he and his followers are indigenous people and that according to a United Nations treaty, he must be released to the custody of his own people for trial. When York and the Nuwaubians first moved to Putnam County from New York in 1993, York claimed to be from another planet.

York supporters file common-law claims seeking \$1 billion

Macon Telegraph/October 23, 2003
By Rob Peecher

Eatonton -- Supporters of Nuwaubian leader Malachi York filed documents Wednesday with the Putnam County Clerk of Superior Court, demanding that state and local prosecutors, judges and law officers pay York more than \$1 billion.

York, who is scheduled to appear before U.S. District Judge Ashley Royal for a status hearing Friday, faces numerous state and federal charges of molesting children.

The documents, which appear to be based on what is known as "common law" and frequently utilized by anti-government militias to harass public officials, also were filed in two child support actions against York.

Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills, who is named among those owing York \$1.069 billion, described the documents as "gobbledygook."

"It's hard to explain what they are," Sills said. "Once again, it's more of the same common law, (Uniform Commercial Code) filings that we've seen before. There's been a plethora of this about. There were recent incidents in DeKalb County involving fraud in housing purchases up there, and I'm aware of other similar filings by Nuwaubians in Bibb County recently."

York is the leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a quasi-religious sect that moved from New York to Putnam County in 1993. The group established its base at a 476-acre compound west of Eatonton where it erected pyramids, a sphinx and other Egyptian-style structures.

York was arrested in May 2002 and charged with more than 200 counts of molesting children. He pleaded guilty in January, but this summer U.S. District Court Judge Hugh Lawson rejected the 15-year negotiated sentence. Lawson later recused himself from the case, and now the case is before Royal.

York has not withdrawn his guilty plea, but he is scheduled to go to trial in January on the federal charges.

Officials in the Bibb County Superior Court clerk's office confirmed there had been a number of recent UCC filings, but declined to comment. Clerk of Court Dianne Brannen was unavailable for comment Wednesday.

The documents filed in Putnam County each exceed 30 pages. Among those named in the document demanding public officials to pay York more than \$1 billion are: Sills; Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Chief Judge William A. Prior and District Attorney Fred Bright; U.S. Attorney Max Wood and Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie; U.S. District Judge Hugh Lawson; one of York's own attorneys, Manny Arora; and the Holy Roman Empire.

Most of the documents bear the signature of "David R. Williams" or "David Paul Williams."

The documents contain virtually nonsensical language, such as: "The purpose for notary is verification and identification only and not for entrance into any foreign U.S. jurisdiction, a benefit for the pagans and heathens so they whom I pray may become knowledgeable in the truth for matters in law by the creator Anu the Most High Heavenly one and repent, so they will no longer be alienated from their true creator, Anu the Creator of Heaven and Earth."

Mike Smith, the communications director for the Georgia Superior Court Clerk's Authority, said his office only keeps track of UCC filings and does not determine the legitimacy of the filings. But Smith said he is aware that "nuisance filings" are a problem in other states such as Oregon, where clerks are attempting to get

legislation passed to address the problem. Legitimate UCC filings are filed by financial institutions or others lending money.

Sills said the documents were delivered by the same courier who delivered similar documents to the clerk of court in July. Among those was a document purporting to be signed by the governor, and Sills said at the time there might be charges pending against the person responsible for the forged document.

While the courier claims to have no knowledge of the contents of the documents, Sills said he admitted being a Nuwaubian.

Sills noted that York's followers have filed similar documents numerous times just before a hearing was scheduled. In July, two of York's followers met with and hand-delivered similar documents to Judge Lawson about two hours before a scheduled hearing.

York's attorneys Arora and Ed Garland did not immediately return calls seeking comment.

Lawyer withdraws guilty plea for York

Nuwaubian leader likely to face new charges, including racketeering

**Macon Telegraph/October 25, 2003
By Rob Peecher**

A federal court judge determined Friday that Nuwaubian leader Malachi York withdrew his previous guilty plea to financial and child sex charges.

York did not directly answer questions from the court about his plea, but U.S. District Court Judge Ashley Royal determined through York's

attorney that he wished to change his plea to "not guilty."

York faces federal charges of transporting children across state lines for sex and evading financial reporting requirements.

Also Friday, York's defense attorneys said they have been put on notice by the government that York will likely face a new round of indictments that include racketeering charges.

York's trial is scheduled for early January. U.S. marshals led York, whose head was newly shaved, into the Macon courtroom in an orange Jones County Jail jumpsuit. His ankles and wrists were bound. He sat at the defense table, flanked by his attorneys, Frank Rubino, Manny Arora and Ed Garland.

When Royal entered the courtroom, York refused to stand up. Two U.S. marshals pulled him to his feet and held him up until Royal told those in the courtroom to be seated.

Royal - who got the case after Judge Hugh Lawson recused himself - began the hearing by saying he was going to pick up where Lawson left off, signaling he would not accept the negotiated plea agreement between York and the government. Lawson, before recusing himself, had said he would not accept a 15-year sentence for York.

Royal also ruled Friday that, based on a recent psychiatric evaluation, York is competent to stand trial. Royal then asked if York would withdraw his guilty plea.

Rubino, one of his attorneys, said he had met with York for four hours the previous day.

"I think he will allow us to withdraw his plea of guilty and reinstate a plea of not guilty," Rubino said.

Typically, a defendant enters his plea on the record, but when Royal asked York to say whether he wanted to withdraw his guilty plea, York declined to give an affirmative response.

Nuwaubians in the News

"As a private citizen and a secured party, I accept this for value," York said.

Royal then asked York a series of questions intended to illicit a direct answer, and York said only, "I accept this for value."

"With all due respect, if I respond to that question I'll be putting myself back in the public," York finally said. "I prefer not to participate in this forum. That's why I have an international attorney sitting here, and he can speak for me."

The language York used is similar to language in "common law" filings his followers have made in courts in Atlanta, Macon and Putnam County - where York's cult group, the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, has a 476-acre compound. The common law filings are similar to those used primarily in western states by anti-government militias.

Rubino made some effort to interpret for the judge.

"The defendant believes that somehow the uniform commercial code has some jurisdiction - I'm scratching for words here, please understand - over this court," Rubino said. "I don't understand this theory, and I don't propound it because I don't understand it. But he is the client, and I do my best to represent him."

York, who in 1993 moved from New York to Georgia with his followers and settled on a farm west of Eatonton, faces both federal and state charges of molesting children. He also faces federal charges of avoiding financial reporting requirements. York was arrested May 8, 2002. In January, he pleaded guilty to 77 state charges of molesting children. He also pleaded guilty to one federal charge of taking children across state lines for the purpose of having sex with them and another of avoiding financial reporting requirements.

Royal did not rule on any outstanding motions during the nearly 30-minute hearing. However, the defense attorneys said they had received

correspondence from the U.S. Attorney's Office suggesting that York in November will likely face a new, superceding indictment that also will allege racketeering crimes.

Also, Rubino took exception to a notice from the U.S. Attorney's Office responding to the defense's witness list.

York apparently is on the list to testify, but federal law allows the government to prosecute both the defendant and his attorneys for perjury if the defendant changes his story from what he said when he pleaded guilty.

Rubino called the notice "a veiled threat," but Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie said he was only following federal law.

Outside the courthouse, York's followers stood along Third Street carrying signs proclaiming their Indian heritage, and some played drums. This summer, York stood before Judge Lawson and claimed he is an "indigenous and sovereign" person and demanded that he be released to his "own people." During that and later hearings, York's followers have shown up wearing Native American-style clothing and playing drums.

"Not all Indians are Redskins," one of the signs said. "There are many black Indian tribes," another said.

York and his followers have also claimed Egyptians heritage.

York has claimed to be an angel or a being from another planet. He and his followers have also claimed to be Muslims, Jews and Christians.

Ga. can pick up prosecution of York's 'main wife'

Macon Telegraph/October 29, 2003
By Rob Peecher

Eatonton -- The Georgia Court of Appeals has ruled that the state can continue its prosecution of accused child molester Kathy Johnson.

Johnson, a co-defendant with United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors leader Malachi York and the woman referred to by York's followers as his "main wife," is accused of molesting children with York. She faces 10 counts of child molestation and two counts of aggravated child molestation.

The appellate court's ruling would allow York and Johnson to be tried together, but prosecutors say that's not likely.

Johnson's attorney, Brian Steele, filed a demand for a speedy trial, and in January he argued that the state did not meet the legal requirements under a speedy-trial demand and sought to have the case dismissed.

Ocmulgee Superior Court Judge William Prior denied the defense's request, finding that two terms of court had expired without Johnson going to trial from the time that her attorney filed the speedy trial demand, but also that there was no jury impaneled to decide the case during the first court term.

Last week, the state appellate court upheld Prior's decision, finding that the jury Steele argued counted in the first term had been discharged, and therefore the clock didn't start running until after the next term of court began.

Steele can ask the appellate court to reconsider the case and can also appeal the decision to the Georgia Supreme Court.

District Attorney Fred Bright said Tuesday, after learning of the court of appeals' decision, that if Steele chooses not to appeal, he will have less than three months to get Johnson to trial.

Johnson was to have been tried with York, but in January he pleaded guilty to 77 state charges of molestation. York, who with Johnson also faced related federal charges, at the time also pleaded guilty to the federal charges. Last week, a federal judge ruled that York had withdrawn his guilty plea to the federal charges, and York is now scheduled to go to trial on the federal charges in January.

York has not withdrawn his guilty plea to the state charges, though he has not been sentenced and could withdraw his plea before he is sentenced. But Bright said that as it stands now, he anticipates trying Johnson alone if she does not appeal or if the appellate courts continue to rule against her.

Johnson pleaded guilty in April to a reduced federal charge of having knowledge of a crime but not participating in the crime.

York and his followers moved from New York to Putnam County in 1993 to a 476-acre farm. There they erected numerous Egyptian-style structures, among them two pyramids and a sphinx, and York claimed to be an alien from the planet "Rizq."

York and Johnson were arrested in May 2002 after a number of children and adults who grew up in his sect came forward with allegations that York, Johnson and others had molested them.

Trial For Sect Leader Moves To Brunswick

Pretrial Publicity Cited In Change

Associated Press/October 30, 2003

Macon, Ga. -- The child molestation trial of Nuwaubian Nation leader Malachi York will be moved to Brunswick because of pretrial publicity, a federal judge announced.

U.S. District Judge Ashley Royal ruled Wednesday that the amount of media coverage in the Macon and Atlanta areas would make it difficult to find an unbiased jury in those areas.

York is the leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a religious sect that moved from New York to a 476-acre farm in Putnam County in 1993.

On May 8, 2002, York, 58, was arrested and charged with both state and federal child sex crimes.

He pleaded guilty to 74 counts of child molestation and other related charges.

He also pleaded guilty to one federal count of transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes in return for a recommendation that he serve 15 years in prison.

But U.S. District Court Judge Hugh Lawson rejected the plea bargain, saying 15 years in prison would be too lenient.

York's attorneys had asked Royal to move the trial to Atlanta, saying that the size of the population would dilute the impact of news reports.

The trial could start as soon as January, although York's lawyers have asked for more time to prepare their defense.

Nuwaubian leader claims torture, kidnapping in lawsuit

**Atlanta Journal-
Constitution/December 2, 2003**

Macon -- The leader of the Nuwaubian religious sect has filed a lawsuit claiming he was kidnapped and has been tortured since a 2002 arrest on child molestation charges.

Malachi York, who remains in custody awaiting a federal trial in January, claims abuses ranging from being denied medication to "coercive sexual conduct" in the 11-page filing.

York refers to himself as "Chief Black Thunderbird 'Eagle'" throughout the claim, filed last week.

While being held for psychological evaluation in New York, York claims he was "blindfolded, hoodwinked and chained to a brick bed when inquiring phone privileges."

His other claims include being denied kosher food, being served discolored water and being "forced to co-inhabit with inmates that have a religious and racial conflict of interest."

On May 8, 2002, York was arrested on state and federal charges of molesting children.

The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors is a cult group started in New York in the early 1970s.

York -- who has alternately claimed to be Muslim, Christian, Native American and from another planet -- moved the group to a 476-acre farm in Putnam County in 1993.

Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills, who was among the state and federal prosecutors and law enforcement agents named as defendants, said the suit lacks merit.

"Who knows what it is or what it means," said Sills, who has been sued unsuccessfully several times by York and his followers. "All it means to me is it will cost us some more money at some point in time to file the appropriate motions to get it dismissed.

"He's never been tortured or under duress while he's been in my custody."

Religious Sect Members Could Face Charges For Lying

Associated Press/December 8, 2003

Brunswick -- Members of a religious sect who asked residents for opinions about their jailed leader's molestation case while marching in a city Christmas parade could face charges for lying on an application to participate in the event, a prosecutor says.

United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors members who marched in Saturday's parade told the event organizer when they applied to participate that they were a Mason's group, officials said.

Authorities are considering whether to charge the group members with submitting false information to a government agency, which is a

felony, said Brunswick prosecutor Stephen Kelley.

During the parade, Nuwaubians handed out literature and asked spectators about the guilt or innocence of their leader, Malachi York. Mayor Brad Brown, who was in the parade, said a document entitled "Medical Records Don't Lie" contained profanity, and in some cases was given to children.

The Nuwaubian delegation in the parade included depictions of the Egyptian pharaoh Rameses, participants wearing bird and cow masks, and a group of mummies carrying parasols.

The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors is a group started in New York in the early 1970s.

York who has alternately claimed to be Muslim, Christian, Native American and from another planet moved the group to a 476-acre farm in Putnam County in 1993.

York's trial on federal child molestation charges is set for next month in Brunswick. The case was moved from Macon because of pretrial publicity.

York's lawyers argue for dismissal

Macon Telegraph/December 17, 2003
By Liz Fabian

The leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, Malachi York, was back in U.S. District Court in Macon Tuesday for a hearing on a number of pre-trial motions filed by his attorneys.

York is accused of taking children across state lines for the purpose of having sex with them and attempting to evade federal financial reporting requirements.

The trial is set to begin Jan. 5 in Brunswick.

Judge Ashley Royal granted a change of venue in October due to pre-trial publicity.

In January, York pleaded guilty to the federal charges, but Royal determined that York withdrew his guilty plea in October.

Attorney Adrian Patrick, the newest member of York's defense team, said they filed a motion to dismiss the case on two grounds - the publicity surrounding York's earlier guilty plea would violate his right to a fair trial and the grand jury was picked from the Middle District of Georgia, which Patrick said was already determined to be a tainted jury pool due to the judge's earlier change of venue ruling.

Royal will issue a ruling on the motions at a later date.

The judge did chide York's followers in court for their participation in the Brunswick Christmas parade earlier this month, where supporters passed out fliers supporting York.

Royal said York will likely remain in custody at the Jones County jail until shortly before the trial begins.

Patrick said the defense is ready to proceed with the January trial.

"You'll get to see a very different side of the case," Patrick said. "Basically you've seen Dr. York get beaten up, but you haven't seen evidence supporting him."

About two dozen people gathered outside the courthouse in support of York and about the same number of supporters sat in the courtroom.

As York left the courtroom with his hands cuffed behind the back of his orange jumpsuit, he smiled at several women in the audience, including a couple of them who blew him a kiss as he passed by.

The Nuwaubians are a cult-like group based in Putnam County that at various times has claimed to be Christian, Muslim, Freemasons and American Indians.

Nuwaubian Nation leader trial may be closed to public

Associated Press/December 19, 2003

Macon, Ga. -- A federal judge may close the child molestation trial of Nuwaubian Nation leader Malachi York to the public because members of his religious sect handed out information about the case while marching in the Brunswick Christmas parade.

The trial is set to begin Jan. 5 in Brunswick. It was moved from Macon because of pretrial publicity.

Judge C. Ashley Royal told lawyers at a Macon hearing this week that he had someone monitoring what people in the Brunswick area were reading about York.

I was extraordinarily unhappy that members of the Nuwaubians went down to (Brunswick) ... and tampered with the jury pool. Whether Mr. York directed this or not makes no difference to me. Its going to make it difficult to pick a jury, he said.

Royal said he has also considered sequestering the jury.

The judge said if the trial is closed to the public, the media will be allowed to attend.

Lawyers said they expect the trial to last three weeks.

Judge Limits Access To Sect Leader's Trial

News4Georgia.com/December 31, 2003

Brunswick, Ga. -- A federal judge is limiting who can sit in the courtroom during the upcoming child molestation trial in Brunswick of Nuwaubian leader Malachi York.

U.S. District Judge Ashley Royal says the courtroom will be closed to everyone except the media and the parties involved in the case. The judge also ruled Tuesday that York's supporters will not be able to demonstrate outside the courthouse.

His supporters and other members of the public will be able to view the trial on closed-circuit television.

York is accused of molesting children at his group's farm in Putnam County. The trial, which was moved to Brunswick because of pretrial publicity, begins Monday.

Tuesday, York fired all but one of his five lawyers. Adrian Patrick is the only one of York's lawyers still officially on the case.

Nuwaubian cult leader's molestation trial could create circus

Associated Press/January 3, 2004
By Mark Niese

Eatonton -- After months of common-law tactics and protests by followers dressed as Egyptian pharaohs, mummies and birds, Nuwaubian cult leader Malachi York's child molestation case finally heads to trial Monday. And officials are doing all they can to keep the courtroom from turning into a circus.

"It's like living in bizarro world," said Frank Ford, an attorney who has argued with the Nuwaubians in court. "They cannot stand being told no, and they cannot stand being ignored."

York, who moved the quasi-religious United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors from New York to a central Georgia farm in 1993, faces 13 federal counts of molestation and racketeering. A plea bargain nearly a year ago was rejected by a judge who felt the proposed 15-year prison sentence was too lenient.

The trial, which was moved 225 miles from Macon to Brunswick because of pretrial publicity, could be dogged by Nuwaubian supporters dressed in Indian garb. Hundreds of protesters have turned out to many of York's court hearings, sometimes beating drums or handing out anti-government literature.

York, aka "Chief Black Thunderbird Eagle," has unsuccessfully argued he has American Indian heritage and shouldn't be judged by the U.S. court system.

In previous hearings, he's responded to a judge's questions with answers based in common law, such as "I accept this for value."

One time, York refused to stand when U.S. District Judge Ashley Royal entered the courtroom. Two U.S. marshals pulled him to his feet and held him until Royal told the courtroom to be seated. "You have this mocking of the court system," said Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills. "These victims have been jerked around and ... it doesn't give the public a lot of confidence."

Hoping to head off potential disruptions, Royal this past week ruled that York's supporters won't be allowed to demonstrate outside the courthouse during the trial, which could last up to three weeks. York's attorney, Adrian Patrick, said he didn't expect protesters to cause any problems, but he couldn't promise York wouldn't resort to unorthodox legal tactics.

"I can't say definitively what will and what won't come up," Patrick said. "It will ultimately be up to the defendant."

Prosecutors have said they plan to make a case that York used his status as a religious leader for sex and money, enriching himself, marrying several women and abusing young girls who were part of his sect. District Attorney Fred Bright, who is heading a planned state prosecution to follow, has accused York of having sexual contact with as many as 13 girls and boys, including instances of sexual intercourse.

York, 58, has maintained he's being unfairly prosecuted because of a vendetta by small-town authorities who dislike the mostly black members of his cult for their unusual practices and a neo-Egyptian compound that includes pyramid-like structures complete with hieroglyphics.

The Nuwaubians, who once claimed 5,000 members but now are down to a few hundred, have actually gone through several transformations since moving to their 476-acre compound. They've dressed as cowboys and American Indians, claimed to be Muslim and Jewish, and York has said he's an extraterrestrial from the planet "Rizq."

At a Christmas parade in Brunswick, the Nuwaubians said they were a Mason's group as they handed out literature and asked spectators about the guilt or innocence of York. Their delegation in the parade included depictions of the Egyptian pharaoh Rameses, participants wearing bird and cow masks, and a group of mummies carrying parasols.

Sect leader's trial setting officials on edge

As the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors leader faces molestation charges today, officials hope to keep his followers from creating a circus.

Associated Press/January 5, 2004

Eatonton, Ga. -- After months of protests by followers dressed as Egyptian pharaohs, mummies and birds, the leader of a quasireligious cult is headed to trial today on charges he molested young followers.

Dwight "Malachi" York leads the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a mostly black sect whose neo-Egyptian compound on a farm in Georgia's Putnam County includes pyramidlike structures. Hundreds of supporters have turned out for his hearings, sometimes dressed in American Indian garb, beating drums or handing out antigovernment literature.

Officials are doing all they can to keep the courtroom from turning into a circus.

"It's like living in bizarro world," said Frank Ford, an attorney who has argued with members of the cult in court. "They cannot stand being told no, and they cannot stand being ignored."

U.S. District Judge Ashley Royal ruled last week that York's supporters won't be allowed to demonstrate outside the courthouse during the trial, which was moved 225 miles from Macon to Brunswick because of pretrial publicity.

York, also known to his followers as Chief Black Thunderbird Eagle, faces 13 federal counts of molestation and racketeering. He reached a state and federal plea bargain that would have given him 15 years in federal prison and 14 years in state prison, but the federal judge rejected the agreement.

The Nuwaubians, founded in New York in the early 1970s, once claimed 5,000 members but now are down to a few hundred. In 1993, York moved the sect to a 476-acre compound near Eatonton, about 60 miles southeast of Atlanta, and the group has gone through several transformations since. They have dressed as cowboys and American Indians, and have claimed to be Muslim and Jewish. York has said he is from the planet "Rizq," and some Nuwaubian literature refers to York as the group's savior or god.

Prosecutors say York used his status as a religious leader for sex and money, enriching himself, marrying several women and abusing young girls who were part of his sect.

One of his wives, Kathy Johnson, was arrested with him in May 2002 and implicated in child molestation involving at least 13 children, including her son. She pleaded guilty to a federal charge of failing to report a crime, but the state case against her is on hold.

At a bail hearing in May 2002, FBI Agent Jalaine Ward testified that three children told her they were forced to perform sexual acts with York and Johnson. The children, ages 4, 6 and 8 at the time, were photographed and videotaped engaging in sexual acts and posing in explicit positions, Ward said.

Ward said witnesses also told investigators that 30 to 35 children ages 4 to 18 were molested.

When Johnson and York were arrested, Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills said most of the living structures on the property were filthy and crowded. In York's house, a single-family home that he has added onto, rooms were crowded with bunk beds that appeared to be for as many as 75 women and children, he said. People who lived in the barn apparently slept on mattresses on the floor, Sills added.

York, 58, has argued he has American Indian heritage and shouldn't be judged by the U.S. court system. In November, he sued state and federal law enforcement officials, claiming he was kidnapped and has been tortured since his arrest in 2002.

It's not York's first brush with the law: He spent three years in a New York prison in the 1960s for assault, resisting arrest and possession of a dangerous weapon. He joined the Black Panther Party and in 1967 formed a black nationalist group in New York.

York's attorney, Adrian Patrick, said he couldn't promise York wouldn't resort to unorthodox legal tactics.

"I can't say definitively what will and what won't come up," Patrick said. "It will ultimately be up to the defendant."

Jury selection begins in cult leaders trial

Associated Press/January 5, 2004

Jury selection was scheduled to begin Monday in Nuwaubian cult leader Malachi Yorks child molestation case.

York, who moved the quasi-religious United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors from New York to a central Georgia farm in 1993, faces 13 federal counts of molestation and racketeering. A plea

bargain nearly a year ago was rejected by a judge who said the proposed 15-year prison sentence was too lenient.

The trial was moved 225 miles from Macon to Brunswick because of pretrial publicity. It could be affected by Nuwaubian supporters dressed in American Indian garb. Hundreds of protesters have turned out to many of Yorks court hearings, sometimes beating drums or handing out anti-government literature.

U.S. District Court Judge Ashley Royal has closed the proceedings to all but the media and those involved in the case to prevent outbursts from Yorks followers and banned protests outside the courtroom.

York, 58, aka Chief Black Thunderbird Eagle, has unsuccessfully argued he has American Indian heritage and should not be judged by the U.S. court system. Prosecutors have said they plan to make a case that York used his status as a religious leader for sex and money, enriching himself, marrying several women and abusing young girls who were part of his sect.

York has maintained hes being unfairly prosecuted because of a vendetta by small-town authorities who dislike the mostly black members of his cult for their unusual practices and a neo-Egyptian compound that includes pyramid-like structures complete with hieroglyphics.

Leader's supporters rally at court

Security guards patrol the entrance to the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors compound in Eatonton.

Athens Banner-Herald/January 5, 2004

By Joe Johnson

Whether street hustler, alien being or Indian chief, Dwight York will be judged in a federal trial due to begin today simply as a man accused of molesting children.

In a prolonged and often bizarre case, the 58-year-old native of Brooklyn, N.Y., has been portrayed in various guises, from an extraterrestrial on an earthly mission to save a select few from a coming apocalypse, a Native American with an intensely devoted tribe, and a con man who created his own religious sect as a front for various illegal activities, including the molestation of children.

With the commencement of jury selection today in U.S. District Court in Brunswick, York's long-delayed trial will have finally begun.

Almost as expected, in a case where the unexpected has been routine, York on the eve of his trial last week fired four members of his defense team. Left standing was Adrian Patrick, an Athens criminal defense attorney with much experience at the local courthouse, but who has never handled a high-profile case such as York's.

Patrick filed his appearance as York's attorney with the court on Dec. 16, which means he has had only a few weeks to familiarize himself with the case on which the dismissed lawyers had spent nearly two years.

Still, the 36-year-old attorney said he welcomed the challenge of defending the self-proclaimed

leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

"It's going to be a war," Patrick promised on Friday. "We're going to be prepared for battle."

Patrick will be up against a prosecution team headed by U.S. Attorney Maxwell Wood.

"It's going to be a long trial, and we've been ready to go to trial for months," Wood said.

Originally scheduled to start Aug. 4 in U.S. District Court in Macon, York's trial has been continuously delayed, for reasons that include psychiatric testing of the defendant, the recusal of a judge, and a change of venue from Macon to Brunswick. The change had been sought by the defense because of the intense media coverage the York case has garnered.

From the time the first potential juror is questioned today until a verdict is reached, the courtroom will be closed to all but the media. The prosecution feared disruption of the trial by York's intensely devout followers, already chided by U.S. District Judge C. Ashley Royal of possibly tainting the jury pool by passing out pro-York fliers in Brunswick.

Wood and Patrick said they expected the trial to last three to four weeks. Wood said he planned to call on more than 30 witnesses to testify.

One of those witnesses will be a woman who accused York of molesting her both at York's house in Athens and at a sprawling Nuwaubian compound in Putnam County.

In a July interview with the Athens Banner-Herald, the woman, now 18, told of how she had accompanied her mother and a younger sister from their home in New York City to live on a sprawling compound in Putnam County York bought in 1993.

The woman, who chose to use the name "Stacey" for the interview, told the Banner-Herald that after working in York's house for a period of time, and after she turned 11, an adult member

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of the Nuwaubian leader's "inner circle" informed her "something wonderful" was going to happen that would have "deep significance for her spiritual development."

That meant, according to Stacey, that by having sex with York, she would be included among the 144,000 believers who would be spirited away to safety from the coming apocalypse by the mother ship from the planet Rizq from the galaxy Illyuwn.

In addition to the Putnam County property, York in 1998 bought a \$528,000 mansion on Mansfield Drive in Athens, where Stacey said she was sometimes taken for more sexual abuse.

It was at about that time she said she began to rebel against York's authority, and upon being sent back to the Putnam compound in 1999, Stacey called her father in New York and asked him to get her. He did, but it wasn't until the next year that Stacey confided in a sister about the sexual abuse she had endured. When the sister told their father, he in turn contacted authorities.

York was arrested in May 2002 on state and federal charges. He subsequently pleaded guilty to 74 state counts of child molestation, and as part of a plea agreement pleaded guilty to a single federal count of transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes.

The plea bargain was rejected earlier this year by U.S. District Judge Hugh Lawson, who said the agreed-upon sentence of 15 years in prison would be too lenient a penalty for York. Lawson then told attorneys he would agree to a 20-year prison sentence, which prompted the defense's motion for Lawson to recuse himself, saying he had lost his impartiality by becoming an unwitting participant in plea negotiations. The judge removed himself from the case on July 18.

With the plea agreement rejected, and suddenly faced with the prospect of a trial, defense attorneys asked for psychiatric examination because they said York was unable to assist in his own defense, as he now claimed to be a

Native American tribal chief over whom U.S. courts held no jurisdiction.

Two days after the request was granted, a new addition to York's defense team filed a motion asking that the order for the psychiatric exam be rescinded. That attorney, Frank Rubino, claimed that after spending two hours with his new client, he determined York was able to assist in his own defense.

In denying the motion, Royal said he was relying on the report that resulted from York's first examination, which concluded that York was possibly suffering from a "mental disease or defect" that could render him incompetent to stand trial.

The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors has at various times claimed to be Christian, Muslim, Freemasons and Native Americans. It would appear from recently filed court documents, as well as the Nuwaubian's Web site, that York will be appearing in court for the trial as Chief Black Thunderbird Eagle. On the Web site, the group now calls itself the Yamassee Native American Moors of the Creek Nation.

Sect leader's trial to begin amid influx of supporters

Athens Banner-Herald/January 5, 2004

By Joe Johnson

Brunswick -- After a marathon jury-selection process on Monday, opening arguments in the long-awaited trial of religious sect leader and accused child molester Dwight "Malachi" York are to begin today in federal court.

Monday's daylong session in U.S. District Court went uninterrupted, with extraordinary security measures taken to thwart possible attempts by York's legion of devout followers to influence jurors. The Anthony A. Alaimo Court Facility in this port city's historic downtown was ringed by dozens of law enforcement personnel, from black SWAT-outfitted Glynn County police officers to machine gun-toting Federal Protective Service officers.

The scene outside the courthouse was markedly different from each of York's - several pre-trial appearances in Macon, where his case was being prosecuted until a change of venue was ordered by presiding U.S. District Judge C. Ashley Royal, who feared potential jurors would be influenced by intense media coverage of the case.

York, 58, is leader of a religious sect that until recently called itself the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors. The group is now called the Yamassee Native American Moors of the Creek Nation, and refers to York as Chief Black Thunderbird Eagle.

York was accused by federal authorities in May 2002 of molesting more than a dozen minor girls, some as young as 11, at both a house he owned in Athens and at a large Nuwaubian compound in Putnam County. He is being tried

on 13 federal counts, including child molestation and racketeering charges. An earlier plea bargain meant to avoid trial was rejected by a different federal judge, who felt the agreed-upon sentence of 15 years in prison was too lenient.

With the courtroom already closed to the public, potential jurors were led out of the courtroom into an adjoining room where the judge could question them about their prior knowledge of York's case out of earshot of reporters, who are being allowed to attend the trial.

At the end of the day, a panel of 16 was chosen, with four jurors to be later designated as alternates. The panel is made up of five women and 11 men, of whom three are black and 13 are white.

Both York's attorney, Adrian Patrick, and U.S. Attorney Maxwell Wood said they were pleased by the jury that was chosen.

"It's hard to tell about a jury before you give them the case, but I think we have the best jury we can get," Patrick said.

"It is a very difficult thing to do with a high-profile case," Wood said, "but with his one-to-one questioning of the jurors, I think Judge Royal was fair to both sides."

Wearing a combination ankh and crucifix, a member of the Nuwaubian religious sect stands outside the federal courthouse. Morris News Service York, however, was far from pleased with the panel that will determine his fate.

"This is a mock jury," he said immediately after Royal adjourned for the day. The defendant was quickly told by his attorney to be quiet before he could explain what he meant by the remark.

While hundreds of his followers had stood vigil outside the Macon courthouse during their leader's pre-trial hearings, fewer than a dozen showed up to watch the proceedings on closed circuit television being provided as a result of the courtroom being closed to the public. The television was in a third-floor courtroom, one

floor above from where the jury was being picked.

One supporter, Frederick Johnson, said he firmly believed in York's innocence, saying he had been pressured into admitting guilt as part of the rejected plea bargain.

"He was under duress and tortured when he pleaded guilty," Johnson said, explaining the torture was not physical, but psychological because of the prison conditions under which York has been living during his 20 months of pre-trial detention.

Wood and Patrick said they expect the trial to last three to four weeks.

Wood said he planned to call on more than 30 witnesses to testify. One of those witnesses will be a woman who accused York of molesting her both at York's house in Athens and at the Nuwaubian compound near Eatonton.

In a previous interview with the Athens Banner-Herald, the woman, now 18, told of how she had accompanied her mother and a younger sister from their home in New York City to live on the Putnam County compound, where she was told the world was going to suffer an apocalypse, but she would be among the chosen few to be saved if she had sex with York.

When addressing potential jurors prior to the selection process, Royal gave them a summary of the prosecution's case against York, which includes allegations that, in addition to molesting children, his religious group was a front for an illegal enterprise that evaded currency transaction reporting requirements.

Jury Picked in Ga. Cult Leader's Trial

Associated Press/January 5, 2004

Brunswick, Ga. -- A jury was picked Monday to hear the case of the leader of a quasi-religious cult accused of molesting young followers.

Trial begins Tuesday for Dwight "Malachi" York of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a mostly black sect whose neo-Egyptian compound on a Georgia farm includes pyramid-like structures.

York, also known to followers as "Chief Black Thunderbird Eagle," faces 13 federal counts of molestation and racketeering. He had reached a plea bargain that would have given him 15 years in federal prison and 14 years in state prison, but a judge rejected it.

Hundreds of his supporters have demonstrated at previous hearings, dressed in American Indian garb and beating drums, but only about 10 family members appeared at the courthouse Monday.

The trial was moved 225 miles from Macon to Brunswick because of pretrial publicity, including months of protests by followers dressed as Egyptian pharaohs, mummies and birds.

Authorities have worried that Nuwaubian supporters could disrupt the trial by intimidating jurors and handing out anti-government literature.

U.S. District Court Judge Ashley Royal has closed the proceedings to all but the media and those involved in the case. He also banned protests outside the courtroom.

York has unsuccessfully argued he has American Indian heritage and should not be judged by the U.S. court system. Prosecutors

have said they plan to make a case that York used his status as a religious leader for sex and money, enriching himself, marrying several women and abusing young boys and girls who were part of his sect.

York has maintained he's being unfairly prosecuted because of a vendetta by small-town authorities who dislike the sect's members.

Witness: Cult leader abused me at age 8

Atlanta Journal-Constitution/January 7, 2004
By Bill Torpy

Brunswick -- The slight, hesitant 19-year-old woman Tuesday looked from the witness stand to an image of herself laughing and wearing a party hat for her eighth birthday. Two months after the photo was taken, the woman testified, she was taken to the home of Nuwaubian cult leader Malachi York and shown pornography by an older girl.

"I was told that's what I'm supposed to do to York," she said.

For the next eight years, she testified, she performed countless sexual acts on York, an ex-con who founded a religious sect 35 years ago and, in 1993, moved with his followers to Middle Georgia. The group, called the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, lived on a 440-acre property in Putnam County where they built pyramids and obelisks. York has alternately claimed he was a god, a Muslim imam, an alien and a Creek Indian.

York, 58, now faces trial in federal court on 13 charges of racketeering and child molestation.

The 19-year-old witness, the first alleged victim to testify against York, said she saw him have sex with at least 10 other girls. She then named them, spelled their names, and recited their ages when they performed the various sexual acts she said she witnessed.

In his opening statement to jurors on Tuesday, defense attorney Adrian Patrick denied the allegations and told jurors the prosecution's case was based only on emotion. Patrick said York should not be judged for his religious beliefs and lifestyle, which he conceded were "different."

Patrick argued that the charges of molestation stem from disgruntled former Nuwaubians. He said 60 children lived at the Putnam County compound when York was arrested in May 2002, but none brought forward allegations against York.

But prosecutors told jurors that York maintained a carefully orchestrated system to sexually abuse children and recruit new victims. York used children he was abusing to introduce younger children -- sometimes their own siblings -- to him so he could gain their confidence, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephanie Thacker. The process included "a well-developed process of steps" that began with "innocent rubbing" and proceeded to intercourse, she said.

Isolation was used to reinforce that system, Thacker said. Children were separated from their parents and housed in spartan dwellings. But York lived in a comfortable home with television, good food and other benefits and used them as rewards for having sex, Thacker said.

The 19-year-old testifying recalled the first time York had sex with her. "When he was finished, he gave me some candy," she said. "I was crying."

The girl testified that she rarely saw her mother, who was a Nuwaubian, and that she believed for years that York was her father. She said she later grew to believe the whole system was wrong.

"He was taking away our childhood," she said. "We didn't get a chance to be like other children."

The trial has been moved from Macon to the coastal city of Brunswick because of extensive publicity. The judge has empaneled an anonymous jury, apparently fearing York's followers would try to disrupt the court.

The courtroom is closed to the public, other than credentialed representatives of the news media, and dozens of law enforcement agents, including an agent with a bomb-sniffing dog, patrol outside the courthouse.

There have been no incidents.

Alleged victim: York stole childhood

**Macon Telegraph/January 7, 2004
By Wayne Crenshaw**

Brunswick - An alleged victim in the child molestation trial of Malachi York described Tuesday how she and other children suffered years of sexual abuse at the hands of the cult leader.

"He was taking away our childhood," said the 18-year-old woman, who spoke in a soft but composed voice during three hours of testimony. Cross-examination will begin this morning.

The woman said she grew up with her mother and siblings, two of whom were York's children, in his compound in Brooklyn, N.Y. She said she was 8 when he first made sexual advances toward her, first fondling her and later asking her to perform oral sex on him. On another occasion, she and a 5-year-old girl performed oral sex on York, the witness testified.

She said the abuse became repeated after he moved the group to a compound in Putnam County, where the group was known as the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

York faces 13 federal counts of child molestation and racketeering. He also faces numerous state charges.

When she was about 15, the witness said, she began seeing the sexual activity as wrong and started trying to avoid York, particularly when he started showing an interest in a younger sister of one of her friends.

"He started talking about wanting to have sex with her and she was really little," she said.

She finally left the compound when she was 16, and went to the FBI when she heard they were investigating York.

She described squalid living conditions for most of the youths in the compound, who were kept separate from their parents and allowed visits only on the weekends. Girls who had sex with York, she said, were given better treatment. In addition to visiting his upscale living quarters, they were taken out to restaurants for dinner, and York bought them clothes and jewelry, including diamond rings, according to the witness.

Most of the children, she said, also had little to eat. Their main diet included beans, rice and "flat bread," which she described as flour mixed with water.

The witness said she was 9 when she came to Eatonton, which is when the sex with York began to include vaginal and anal intercourse.

"Two or three times a week we started having sex acts," she said.

York would use baby oil during sex, she said, and U.S. Assistant Attorney Richard Moultrie displayed photos taken in two bedrooms of York's home that showed bottles of baby oil on shelves near the beds. The photos were taken when federal and state authorities raided the

Eatonton compound and his Athens home on May 8, 2002.

In his opening statement, defense attorney Adrian Patrick said the evidence would show that the allegations were coming from members of four families that had fallen out of favor with York and were out to get him.

"One of the primary witnesses ran the organization for many years and was ousted in February 2001 because she was out of control," Patrick said.

He also blamed that witness for what prosecutors allege were attempts to illegally hide monetary transactions. Patrick said York filed tax returns every year and made no attempt to hide his financial dealings.

At least three of the government's witnesses, he said, are testifying to avoid child molestation charges themselves.

The victim who testified Tuesday cited numerous occasions in which she and other girls her age, or younger, had sex together with York. She cited one instance in which York and his "main wife," Kathy Johnson, took the witness and several other minor girls on a trip to Orlando. One of the girls performed oral sex on him in front of everyone while they were watching TV in a hotel room; another girl went into York's bedroom and had sex with him, the witness said.

Last January, York pleaded guilty to federal charges and to 77 state charges of molestation. The plea agreement would have sent York to prison for 15 years, but a federal judge rejected the sentence as too lenient.

York has not withdrawn his guilty plea to the state charges, though he has not been sentenced and could withdraw his plea before he is sentenced.

York and his followers moved from New York to Putnam County in 1993 to a 476-acre farm, where they erected numerous Egyptian-style

structures, among them two pyramids and a sphinx. York has alternately claimed to be Muslim, Christian, American and from another planet.

His trial is expected to last about three weeks.

Trial continues for sect leader

Athens Banner-Herald/January 8, 2004

By Mark Niese

Brunswick -- A former cult member told a jury Wednesday how the group transformed from a Muslim commune in New York to an extremist sect that groomed girls for sex with its leader, Dwight "Malachi" York.

York, originally a Muslim cleric in Brooklyn, is on trial in U.S. District Court here for molesting up to 13 girls and boys and bringing them to the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors compound in rural Georgia for sex.

The woman who testified Wednesday, now 28 years old, said York methodically broke down girls' inhibitions as he prepared them for sex with him.

York would first give the girls special privileges, such as soda, pizza and TV, she said. Then the girls would be moved on to pornographic movies and sex toys in preparation for sex with York.

The girls were told it was traditional for members of the group to have sex with the leader of the group so they could learn about intercourse and later please their husbands, the witness said.

"A male member of the family would teach a girl about sex," she said. "At first, I felt kind of funny about it, but after a while I said 'OK.'"

The alleged victim, then 13 years old, left the neo-Egyptian Nuwaubian compound near Eatonton in Putnam County in 2000 and later helped her sister escape. She testified Wednesday as part of a deal with the government not to be prosecuted if she took the stand.

York, 58, faces 13 federal counts of child molestation and racketeering for using his power as leader of the Nuwaubians to have sex with children between the ages of 5 and 17.

The woman hadn't been questioned by the defense yet Wednesday when court adjourned.

Earlier Wednesday, York's attorneys questioned the credibility of an 18-year-old woman who said York used toffee candy and diamonds to seduce girls into sex.

The attorney, Adrian Patrick, asked her about inconsistencies between what she told the FBI and what she said in court. She had previously said she first had sex with York in his trailer, although under oath Wednesday she said the incident happened at his home.

"I wasn't lying intentionally. They were asking me a lot of questions ... it was a mistake," she said. She said Wednesday she was sure that the incident happened in the home.

The trial, which is expected to last three weeks, was moved 225 miles from Macon to Brunswick because of pretrial publicity, including months of protests by followers dressed as Egyptian pharaohs, mummies and birds.

York has unsuccessfully argued he has American Indian heritage and should not be judged by the U.S. court system.

U.S. District Court Judge Ashley Royal closed the proceedings to all spectators but the media. The hundreds of Nuwaubian supporters expected

to protest at the trial have not materialized, but about 30 were allowed to watch the proceedings from a closed-circuit TV in a separate courtroom.

Former cult members says girls were groomed for sex

The Associated Press/January 8, 2004

Brunswick, Ga. -- A former cult member told a jury Wednesday how the group transformed from a Muslim commune in New York to an extremist sect that groomed girls for sex with its leader, Malachi York.

York, originally a Muslim cleric in Brooklyn, is on trial for molesting up to 13 girls and boys and bringing them to the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors compound in rural Georgia for sex.

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about 30 were allowed to watch the proceedings from a closed-circuit TV in a separate courtroom.

York accuser admits inconsistencies in statements

Macon Telegraph/January 8, 2004
By Wayne Crenshaw

Brunswick -- A woman who said cult leader Malachi York molested her for several years admitted under cross-examination Wednesday that some details of her testimony were inconsistent with previous statements.

The 18-year-old woman, however, stuck by her story that York engaged in repeated sex acts with her from the time she was 8.

Also Wednesday, the woman's older sister testified that as a young teenager, she was filmed nude by one of York's female followers who recruited and groomed her to have sex with York.

Lead defense attorney Adrian Patrick showed the 18-year-old witness transcripts of her testimony to a grand jury and a statement to FBI investigators in which she admitted some details were different. For instance, she testified on direct examination Tuesday that the first time she had vaginal sex with York was in a trailer at the cult's compound in Putnam County, but she told the grand jury and FBI investigators that the incident happened in York's house.

"I must have mistakenly said 'trailer' instead of 'house,' " she said.

Also, Patrick showed her a report from an examination a year ago at a children's hospital in

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New York after the FBI began investigating the allegations. The report indicated that she told the doctor York had vaginal sex with her when she was 8. She testified Tuesday that she was 13 when that happened.

She disputed the accuracy of the hospital report.

"That's not what I said," she testified.

She also said she must have "lied by accident" when she told the grand jury she had no money when she left York's group in 2001. She testified Tuesday that she had \$300.

But a nationally known expert in child molestation testified later in the day that child molestation victims usually give inaccurate, mistaken or incomplete information because of fear and embarrassment about the events.

"Their answers are related to the reality of being a compliant victim and society's inability to deal with it," said retired FBI agent Kenneth Lanning, who now consults on child molestation cases across the country. "The kids feel guilty because they didn't say 'no.' " Lanning is known for developing a profiling system of child molesters, whom he classifies as either "situational offenders" or "preferential offenders."

Though he did not refer to York and said he has little knowledge of the case, his description of a preferential offender fit the image of York the prosecution is attempting to portray. Lanning described such an offender as intelligent, methodical and able to get away with molestation offenses for many years with many different children. They often seduce children gradually and use older victims to recruit younger victims. Such offenders also gravitate to occupations where they could have authority over children.

Also Wednesday, a pediatrician and child abuse expert who examined the woman said she found scarring and tissue loss that were consistent with repeated sexual molestation.

The last witness of the day was the 18-year-old's sister, who is now 28. U.S. District Court Judge Ashley Royal told the jury she was not testifying as a victim as related to the charges against York, but as a corroborating witness.

She testified that while the group, known as Nuwaubians, were in Brooklyn in New York City, York began to lure her into a sexual relationship through a 20-year-old woman she referred to as Nathada. Nathada, she said, starting telling her at age 13 that girls should be taught sex by males in "the family."

"She did ask me would I mind if (York) taught me different things about sex," she said.

Nathada later demonstrated oral sex techniques on a sex toy, and then asked if she was "ready for the real thing," the witness said. She said she "chickened out" but later did perform oral sex on York. She also said the older woman made a video of her in the nude, which the woman told her she gave to York, then later told her "he liked it."

At about that point, Royal halted court for the day. The woman's testimony will continue this morning.

The woman's statement about how she was gradually lured into sex with York also is consistent with her sister's testimony. The younger sister testified that a 15-year-old girl approached her when she was 8 with the suggestion that she have sex with York.

Juanita Tomlinson, a former employee of Wal-Mart in Milledgeville, testified that York came to the jewelry department with a girl who appeared to be 12 to 14 years old and bought her a diamond ring. She said he later returned with another girl, about the same age, and also bought her a diamond ring.

The 18-year-old had testified that York bought diamond rings for girls who had sex with him.

But under cross-examination Tomlinson said the two girls could have been York's daughters.

York, 58, is facing 13 counts of child molestation and racketeering charges.

York and his followers moved from New York to Putnam County in 1993 to a 476-acre farm, where they erected numerous Egyptian-style structures. York has claimed to be Muslim, Christian, American Indian and from another planet.

Wednesday, the 28-year-old witness said that in her early years in York's group, he claimed to be the angel Michael and that he was 76 trillion years old. She also said he claimed to have 19 different personalities.

His trial, which is expected to last three weeks, was moved from Macon to Brunswick because of pretrial publicity.

Victim's testimony heard

Athens Banner-Herald/January 8, 2004

By Terry Dickson

Brunswick -- A second woman and a man testified Thursday about having sex as children with Dwight "Malachi" York, the leader of a quasi-religious sect in Middle Georgia who is on trial in federal court on charges of child molestation and racketeering.

The 28-year-old woman said Thursday the mistreatment began when she was 15 and living in New York - before York and his followers moved to a compound near Eatonton in Putnam County.

The woman testified York kept her on the 440-acre compound with warnings that demons lurked beyond the gates and that rape, murder and drugs awaited on the outside.

Federal prosecutors have said York's followers at the neo-Egyptian United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors compound lived in squalid conditions and worked long hours without pay to raise money to support York's lavish lifestyle. York also used the money to support the boys, girls and young women that he routinely used for sex, prosecutors have said.

Federal prosecutors have said Dwight York's followers lived in squalid conditions to help support York's lavish lifestyle. The trial was moved to Brunswick from Macon because of extensive pretrial publicity.

The woman told the court that her mother brought along her sister and brother when she joined the Nuwaubian cult in New York. Both she and her younger sister, who testified earlier in the week, had sex with York as children, the woman said.

She also testified to horrid living conditions at the compound, except in the house where York lived. She said York kept girls and women at his beck and call for sex.

Necessities were in short supply or non-existent elsewhere in the compound. York sometimes refused requests for food, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, combs, baby diapers and other essentials, she said.

One woman resorted to boiling rice in the morning and giving the water to her baby and to using towels for diapers, the 28-year-old said.

Women used old stockings and towels for sanitary napkins, she said. When things broke at "the girls' house," they sometimes went unrepaired, including windows, fallen doors and holes in walls, she said.

Things were different at "Building 100," where York lived, she said.

"He had china and filet mignon, always hot water. If he had problems, the brothers would quickly fix it," she said.

Evidence photos of York's residence show ornate decorations, gold fixtures and plush furniture. A gilded staircase bore a sign that said, "Do Not Go Upstairs."

But it was up those stairs that York compelled youngsters to have sex with him, a 23-year-old man testified.

He described in graphic detail encounters in which York had sex with him beginning when he was a 13-year-old boy.

"He said it wouldn't be considered gay. It was supposed to be secret between me and Mr. York," the man said.

The man said he had been born into one of York's communities in Brooklyn and was taken from his parents to live with other children. He recalled the organization moving to Sullivan County in upstate New York, where York sometimes appeared on the balcony of a house and threw money down to his followers.

A series of FBI agents testified Thursday to searching the Putnam County compound, where they found pornographic comic books, videotapes and DVDs, among other things.

Agents also found a locked briefcase that contained more than \$270,000 in \$50 and \$100 bills. The government has said York had workers separate the large bills from cash the Nuwaubians took in, and used it for his personal benefit.

Woman testifies she groomed younger victims for York

Macon Telegraph/January 9, 2004
By Wayne Crenshaw

Brunswick -- A woman testifying under an immunity agreement in the child molestation trial of cult leader Malachi York said Thursday that he began having sex with her when she was 15, and as an adult she recruited and groomed younger victims for him.

One of those alleged victims, a male now 23, also testified and said York had sex with him when he was 13. He and the woman also said they had sex together with York. The woman, now 28, is the older sister of the first alleged victim to testify.

"A lot of things went on that I didn't think were wrong because that was just the way we lived," she said.

She spent nearly seven hours on the witness stand beginning Wednesday, and gave a detailed account of her life in York's cult, the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, though it was under a different name when she entered the group as a youngster in Brooklyn.

Sexual activity with York, she said, began when the group was in Sullivan County, N.Y., then she took on a recruiting role when they moved to a 467-acre neo-Egyptian compound in Putnam County in 1993. She said York first brought her and several other young girls to the compound before moving the rest of the group.

Like her sister and the male witness, she described squalid living conditions for children, who were kept in separate buildings from their parents. One girl fell through the floor when it collapsed while she was taking a shower, and the buildings were infested with mice, she said.

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But she didn't consider leaving, and at one time even warned her younger sister against leaving, because she said York taught that the world outside the compound was dangerous and evil.

"He would tell us once we leave the grounds, there is some hexagon that lights up around the planet and lets the demons know to attack us," she said. The male who testified said he was 13 when one night he entered a trailer that York sometimes occupied away from his opulent home on the compound. An older girl was in the trailer, he said, and the two started having sex in front of York, who began masturbating. He said York later had sex with him. The witness was still on the stand when the proceedings ended for the day and will return this morning.

The woman described an incident in which she, York and another 14- or 15-year-old male had sex in a bedroom of a building near York's home. The prosecution had earlier shown a photo of that room, which had a sunken, bathtub-shaped sauna at the end of the bed.

The woman said she had sex in the sauna and that York told them to also have sex on the bed. She identified a request form she filled out while she was on the compound. The forms, she said, were required for such basic items as toiletries and sanitary napkins. Some parents had to use towels for diapers, she said. No one was ever paid for work, and all money earned by trinkets and other items sold by the group went to York, the woman said.

Food was so poor, according to the woman, that at one time she was admitted to intensive care because a potassium deficiency left her virtually paralyzed. Doctors ordered her to eat certain foods which she said she sometimes got but usually didn't.

Children who agreed to have sex with York would often be invited to his house, where food and living conditions were much better, she said.

According to the woman, York once told her to fondle a male toddler.

"(York) said his aunt did that to him when he was a boy," the woman said.

After she testified, the government called a string of FBI agents to identify numerous items of evidence they recovered from a search of York's compound.

Though the contents of several boxes were not discussed, one agent identified a briefcase found in York's home as having contained \$279,450. Another agent identified a case of DVDs as containing several pornographic movies, including such titles as Debbie Does Dallas. He said the case was recovered from York's bedroom.

The woman said she was told that pornographic videos made of children on the compound were destroyed by York's son.

The woman said she left the compound three years ago because she was told to get a job outside the compound or get kicked out. The male said he was kicked out when he was 19 after a guard accused him of not doing any work. He said it was late at night and no one else was working, but he had no objection to the order to leave.

York, 58, is facing 13 counts of child molestation and racketeering.

Attorney claims bias by judge in York case

Macon Telegraph/January 9, 2004
By Wayne Crenshaw

Fireworks erupted Friday in the federal child molestation trial of cult leader Malachi York when his defense attorney angrily accused the judge of bias for the prosecution and asked that he remove himself from the case.

U.S. District Court Judge Ashley Royal, however, said he would not step down.

Also Friday, a 16-year-old girl testified that York began having sex with her when she was 12 and that it didn't stop until he was arrested three years later.

Adrian Patrick, York's attorney, asked that Royal remove himself following a conference at the judge's bench. Patrick asked for the jury to be excused, then stood before the judge and accused him of making an improper suggestion to assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie.

"The court prompted the government to introduce evidence," Patrick told the judge in a raised voice.

The conference involved a medical report on a male witness who testified that York molested him repeatedly as a child. The report indicated that the witness originally denied being molested, but both the witness and FBI agent Joan Cronier said the report was wrong. Patrick said Royal prompted the prosecution to introduce another section of the report.

"The court is overstepping its bounds," Patrick said.

"I can present evidence," Royal responded. "I can question witnesses. You are incorrect in that."

Outside the courtroom, Middle District U.S. Attorney Max Wood called Patrick's demand "totally without merit."

Moultrie questioned the male witness about a section of the report that indicated he was getting the exam because of concerns of diseases related to the York case.

Five children were taken into protective custody when local and federal officers raided the Putnam County village where York and his followers lived in May 2002. According to authorities, four of five children tested positive for sexually transmitted diseases.

The 16-year-old girl who testified Friday was the youngest of the alleged victims to take the stand so far. Her brother, the first alleged male victim to testify, took the witness stand Thursday.

The girl admitted that she at one time denied being molested. Patrick pointed out that in her original interview, when investigators asked if she knew why she was being interviewed, she responded, "Because of the lies they have been saying about Mr. York."

She said she gave that statement because she was scared and had been warned not to talk about sexual activity with York. She recanted several months later.

Her testimony was followed by that of an 18-year-old male, the younger brother of the first two alleged female victims to testify. He was the witness on the stand when Patrick asked Royal to recuse himself. The witness said York began to behave sexually toward him when he was 7, and molestations continued for years afterward. He left York's Putnam County compound in 2001 with his mother and sisters, he said, when his mother found out about sexual activity between her children and York.

He admitted to a meeting with his father, York defense attorney Manny Aurora and a defense investigator during which he denied being molested. He said he did so because he feared his mother could face charges if the allegations came out.

In all, five people took the witness stand this week and said York molested them repeatedly. They all said the molestations began at a young age, gradually evolved to intercourse, continued regularly for a number of years and often involved other children and adults.

But with most of the witnesses, Patrick pointed out inconsistencies between their testimony and previous statements. After court Friday, Patrick said the inconsistencies are significant to the defense.

"I think the way it was set up, the defendant was going to come into court and get slaughtered," he said. "It seems as if the witnesses are changing their stories. I see substantial inconsistencies."

Wood, however, said he was pleased with the first week of testimony.

"It's not unusual in child molestation cases to have inconsistent evidence because you are dealing with children," he said. "We'll have more than the victims' testimony."

Two witnesses have identified what they described as a sex toy, a stuffed Pink Panther with male genitalia sewed on it. An FBI agent testified earlier that the item was found in York's bedroom.

York, 58, is facing 13 counts of child molestation and racketeering. He is head of the United Nuwabian Nation of Moors, a quasi-religious sect which moved to a 467-acre neo-Egyptian compound in Putnam County in 1993.

The group has changed form several times from its beginnings as a Muslim group in Brooklyn, N.Y. The group dressed as cowboys when it moved to Putnam County, and has most recently

dressed as American Indians, claiming to be an Indian tribe and York a chief. He has also claimed to be an angel and alien from the planet "Rizq."

The trial will resume Monday, and prosecutors expect to finish their case by Thursday or Friday. Patrick said the defense will call witnesses to refute not only the molestation allegations, but also the testimony of the alleged victims about squalid living conditions on the compound.

Experts see manipulator in sect leader

York on trial

Athens Banner-Herald/January 11, 2004

By Joe Johnson

The social organization of the religious sect led by Dwight "Malachi" York appeared to have been structured as an elaborate grooming process for victims used to satisfy York's lust as an alleged pedophile, according to experts on child sexual abuse.

Growing up in isolation on York's 440-acre Putnam County compound, children - along with their indoctrination into the sect's philosophies, which held York to be a deity - appeared to have been subjected to a form of brainwashing commonly used by pedophiles known as "child sexual abuse accommodation syndrome," according to William Bernet, director of forensic psychiatry at Vanderbilt University.

"What happens is, the child just comes to expect what she has learned within that small culture, and if kept in that isolated place that child will

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accept and adopt whatever she is told," Bernet said.

York, 59, is being tried in U.S. District Court in Brunswick on 13 federal counts, including child molestation. Witnesses have testified that they were being groomed as York's sex partners when they were as young as 8 years old.

Dwight "Malachi" York is charged with sexually abusing young followers. According to trial testimony, children were segregated from their parents by sex and kept in substandard housing. They were home-schooled on the compound, and taught that York was a deity.

"Because he was able to manipulate people into believing he is a god makes him very powerful," said Carole Lieberman, a psychologist from Beverly Hills, Calif., who has testified as an expert witness in several high-profile cases. "For the victims, it becomes an honor to be able to serve him."

One witness testified that when she was 8, a 16-year-old follower of York showed her a videotape of adults having oral sex, "telling me that was what I was supposed to do to Mr. York." The witness, now 19, testified she did what she was told, thus beginning an eight-year period of abuse in which York allegedly had sex with her "two or three times a week" and in which the acts escalated to anal sex, then intercourse and finally group sex with York and other young girls.

Girls that had sex with York were treated better than others on the compound, according to testimony, given such rewards as jewelry, clothes and trips to Disney World.

"At its core, this case is about power," Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephanie Thacker told jurors in opening statements when the trial got under way last week in Brunswick. "(York) abused that power to engage in criminal sexual activities with minors, and to structure financial transactions in a criminal manner."

York is leader of a religious sect that until recently called itself the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors. The group is now called the Yamassee Native American Moors of the Creek Nation, and refers to York as Chief Black Thunderbird Eagle. He was accused by federal authorities in May 2002 of molesting more than a dozen minor girls, at both a house he owned in Athens and at the Nuwaubian compound near Eatonton in Putnam County.

York's trial is being held in Brunswick due to the defense's change of venue request, which claimed potential jurors would be influenced by the massive pre-trial publicity York's case had garnered while being prosecuted in Macon in the pre-trial stage.

Thacker told jurors that York ran his sect in a way that isolated his young victims - making them live separately from their parents under sometimes squalid conditions - in order to make them dependent on him and more pliant when approached for sexual favors.

In his opening statement, defense attorney Adrian Patrick said allegations of sexual abuse of children had been fabricated by a small group of York's estimated 5,000 followers and spearheaded by a woman who used to manage the Nuwaubian business office but was kicked out of the group.

According to Thacker, the house in which the young girls lived on York's compound often lacked heat and electricity, and had no television. She told the jury that sometimes the children survived by eating flour, sugar and popcorn seeds. Alleged victims being groomed for York's sexual gratification would be brought to his house on the compound, where they would be lavished with good food, candy and ice cream, and be allowed to watch television, the prosecutor said.

FBI agents testified that upon searching the compound, they found pornographic cartoon videotapes that had been shown to children to prepare them for sex with York.

The young woman who testified that her sexual abuse began when she was 8 told jurors that she had come to believe that York was her father.

"What (York) seems to have done is develop a very deliberate, sophisticated grooming process that involved many factors, including keeping the children isolated so that they become compliant and expecting that (the alleged abuse) will happen to them," Bernet said.

'This little town didn't back up'

Eatonton feels relief as nearby cult wanes

**The Atlanta Journal-Constitution/January 11, 2004
By Bill Torpy**

Eatonton -- The grandmother and community activist now smiles when thinking of the "wanted" poster once put out on her. Georgia Benjamin-Smith says the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors once offered \$500 for dirt on her and others who were seen as enemies of the outlandish religious group.

Benjamin-Smith can now venture a grin because she senses an end to a conflict that has roiled Putnam County for much of the past decade.

Malachi York, the religious leader who moved his flock from New York to property near here a decade ago to build his idea of Utopia -- complete with pyramids, obelisks and a Sphinx -- went on trial last week in federal court on charges of child molestation and racketeering.

"It's been a nightmare, but we did something New York couldn't do," said Benjamin-Smith, referring to other investigations into the group there that never produced any charges. "We

stayed on it and didn't back up. This little town didn't back up."

Many Eatonton residents -- at least those who will talk about the 58-year-old York and his followers publicly -- say they are happy his case has finally come to trial and that the trial is not being held nearby. The trial has been moved to the Georgia coastal city of Brunswick, where it is being held under security so tight that early in the week some armed law enforcement agents wore masks to avoid being identified.

"People are quiet now, very quiet; they're waiting," said Benjamin-Smith, who says she found herself at odds with the Nuwaubians when she resisted the group's efforts to take over the local NAACP chapter. The Nuwaubians at the time also were locked in court battles with the county on zoning and building matters and accused county officials of racism, conspiracy and harassment.

Some in the community told Benjamin-Smith to back off. "I was told more than once, 'Leave him alone. He's just a black man trying to have something,'" she said. "But I had a gut feeling something was wrong. I'd say, 'What's wrong with you? Don't you see what's going on?'"

Sandra Adams, a county commissioner, also ended up on the "wanted" list. "This was made a racial thing and it tore the community apart," Adams said. "Al Sharpton, who is running for president, came down here and attacked us."

At one time, the Nuwaubians claimed to have 5,000 members and the Eatonton property drew national black leaders like Jesse Jackson, in 2001, and Sharpton, in 1999.

Activity on the 400-plus-acre compound now is minimal. Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills, who has had run-ins with the Nuwaubians since 1997, believes fewer than 40 people now live there, down from an estimated 200 at its late 1990s peak. York's arrest in May, 2002, crippled the organization, Sills said. What is left of the ever-morphing sect remains in a holding pattern.

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The grand Egyptian-style arch at the entrance of the Nuwaubian "holy land" is water-damaged and rotting.

Outside the gate, a life-size statue of an Indian stands sentry, peering into the distance. The Indian wears a beard resembling York's. The Indian represents York's newest incarnation. He now says he is a Yamassee Creek Indian named Chief Black Thunderbird Eagle and leader of an indigenous nation. In the past, he has called himself a Muslim imam and a being from outer space.

These days York is most notably an accused child-molester. He has spent the past week in a heavily fortified federal courthouse, where he is on trial for 13 child molestation and racketeering charges. If convicted, he could spend the rest of his life in prison.

Prosecutors allege York, who was arrested 20 months ago, used his teachings, his group's isolation and his own cult of personality to create and maintain a carefully orchestrated system to sexually abuse children. Several former members have testified that York sexually abused them when they were children.

York says he is innocent. His lawyers say the alleged victims testifying against him are part of a conspiracy of disgruntled former Nuwaubians caught up in a power struggle.

"The truth will come out," Frederick Johnson, a York supporter, vowed as he and a handful of other supporters waited to be escorted on an elevator by U.S. marshals to a third-floor courtroom where they watch the trial on closed-circuit TV. The courtroom where York is being tried is closed to all but credentialed media members. And the jury remains anonymous, unknown to the defense and even federal prosecutors.

U.S. District Judge C. Ashley Royal moved the trial from Macon because of pre-trial publicity. But he locked down the courthouse, fearing that Nuwaubians might intimidate witnesses and jurors and disrupt the proceedings.

In past hearings elsewhere, York's followers have packed courtrooms and have stood outside chanting and banging drums. About 200 Nuwaubians introduced themselves to Brunswick residents by marching in the Christmas parade, wearing colorful costumes, mummy outfits and bird and cow masks and handing out flyers. "I guess you'd call them New Age Egyptian," Brunswick police Sgt. Kevin Jones said.

Brunswick residents like retired paper mill supervisor Jimmy Williamson were bemused by the spectacle and impressed by the costumes. He was picking up his mail at the post office housed in the courthouse and passed through a phalanx of federal, state and local law enforcement agents.

"This a good trial for the G-8 conference," Williamson said, referring to the meeting of world leaders set for June at nearby Sea Island.

Most people passing the courthouse glance at the police, and residents still smile talking about the Christmas parade, but there is little local interest in the trial.

During the first week of a trial expected to last three to four weeks, there were few disruptions. Police said one man claimed he was Jesus, blocked traffic and was arrested. About 40 York supporters, most conservatively dressed and polite, have attended, many taking copious notes of the testimony.

"We were expecting more [York supporters]," said Sgt. Jones. "I don't know where they all went."

Sheriff Sills, in Brunswick for the trial, says the "only thing predictable about this group is that it is totally unpredictable. They could all be dressed in clown outfits tomorrow and it wouldn't surprise me a bit."

Johnson complained the expectations of big crowds and of trouble at the courthouse were produced by law enforcement officers' fears.

"This excessive show of force tells the jurors that we're here to protect you from a threat," Johnson said. He also claims that isolation and mental "torture" helped prompt York's two guilty pleas last year to the molestation charges. A federal judge refused to accept the 15-year plea deal, saying it was too lenient.

The Nuwaubians have long raised conspiracy theories. One of the newest Nuwaubian charges is a "bulletin" on the group's Internet site claiming Judge Royal "hates" Nuwaubians because his great-great-great-grandfather was a Confederate soldier who fought the Creek Indians.

If convicted on racketeering charges -- that York allegedly operated the group to commit crimes -- the federal government could seize the property outside Eatonton and sell it.

Benjamin-Smith thinks a conviction of York will kill off the group.

"With the king bee gone, [the followers] will scatter like ants," she said.

Women say York molested them, fathered children

Macon Telegraph/Janury 13, 2004
By Wayne Crenshaw

Two women testified Monday that they were molested by cult leader Malachi York as children, then became pregnant by York when they were 17. Both women gave birth, but did not list York as the father on the birth certificates.

"We were told not to put his name on the birth certificate," said one of the women, who is now

28. She said York first molested her when she was 13, and she later recruited and groomed younger victims for him. The paternity of her son by York was confirmed by a DNA expert who testified.

Investigators have previously said York is believed to have fathered about 100 children.

The other woman to testify, who is now 26, was a last-minute addition to the trial. She said she was praying a week ago when a news report about York's trial came on television, and she contacted investigators.

"I had to step up," she said. "I'm the victim here. I'm not the bad person, and I wanted to let the world know that what he did was wrong."

She said she started having sex with York when she was 14. After she gave birth, she said, she decided to leave the compound, but had no money and no place to go, and had to leave her son behind.

"I was just distraught in my mind," she said. "I couldn't do it no more."

She said she was told as a girl that it was "a privilege" to have sex with York, and she felt that way even after she grew into adulthood.

The 28-year-old woman testified that York once told her why he liked to have sex with young girls.

"His purpose for doing it was to keep the girls loyal to our culture," she said. "He said if you have a girl when she is a virgin, she is more likely to remain loyal to you."

The woman was identified in the defense's opening argument as one of the government's key witnesses. She formerly handled the finances for York's group, the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

She gave the first significant testimony in relation to the racketeering charges against York, saying that he ordered her to split up bank

deposits so as not to exceed \$10,000. That order, she said, came after she tried to make a bank deposit over that amount, which requires a transaction report.

She described how a chain of stores in several cities - including Macon - sold books and products developed at the compound, generating from \$20,000 to \$70,000 every two weeks.

The money would come in from the stores every other Wednesday, she said, and all \$50 and \$100 bills went directly to York, which he kept in a black brief case. A black brief case containing \$279,450 was recovered from York's bedroom during a search of his property.

The rest of the money, she said, went to the bank account for Holy Tabernacle Ministries. She identified a series of deposit slips, on consecutive days, which she said showed the split deposits.

Also Monday, a 19-year-old man testified that York began molesting him when he was 13.

Eight alleged victims have testified, and all have said the molestations began when York's group was located in Sullivan County, N.Y. Most have said the molestations increased after the group moved to a 467-acre tract in Putnam County, where they constructed Egyptian-themed buildings, including two pyramids and a Sphinx.

The alleged victims also said they were among the first members that York moved to Putnam County, with the rest of the group coming later. The federal child molestation charges against York accuse him for transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes. Some have also said he took them on a trip to Disney World in Orlando, Fla., where they said he had sex with them.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie said at the end of the day Monday that the government will call six more alleged victims. He said the prosecution may rest its case late Wednesday or early Thursday.

Witness tells of sex abuse, death threat by York

Macon Telegraph/January 15, 2004
By Wayne Crenshaw

Brunswick -- Throughout the trial of Malachi York, jurors have heard the name of one alleged victim more than any other. On Wednesday, they finally saw the tender-voiced 16-year-old, who told them York molested her repeatedly for years beginning when she was 5.

The sexual abuse stopped, she said, when she was about 13 and began rebelling. She left the cult's compound with her sister and mother after York started showing a sexual interest in her 12-year-old sister.

"I was upset because I always said he could do whatever with me, but he's not going to touch my sister," she said.

The girl's mother had testified Tuesday that York threatened to kill her daughter if she went to the authorities with allegations of sexual abuse. The girl also said York threatened her life, saying he would throw her body "behind the deer pen," a fenced area on York's 467-acre Putnam County compound that was formerly a hunting preserve.

Following her testimony, Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie announced the government was finished with its case except for one, brief witness who was not available Wednesday. The witness will testify this morning.

Defense attorney Adrian Patrick said he expects to finish the defense case by Tuesday.

The 16-year-old witness Wednesday also said that while she was staying at York's compound for the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, her

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mother was staying with York in Athens in what followers called "the mansion." Both testified that he cut off contact between the two and tried to drive them apart.

"He said my mother hated me and she didn't want to be my mother anymore," she said, choking back tears.

Cheryl Collins, a psychiatrist who treated the girl at National Children's Hospital in Washington, D.C., said the girl had post-traumatic stress disorder, which Collins said often occurs as a result of child abuse. She said the girl had nightmares, behavioral problems and showed signs of depression during her stay at the hospital. She also said the girl spoke about the abuse in a "detached monotone" and a "flat effect," which Collins said is a common coping mechanism for child abuse victims.

For the second time in the trial, Patrick accused U.S. District Court Judge Ashley Royal of helping the prosecution and asked that Royal remove himself from the case. Prior to the girl's testimony, Royal called attorneys from both sides to the bench. After a conference, Patrick stated in open court that Royal had told him not to ask the girl about her mother's testimony that the girl had a problem with lying. Patrick said the judge should not have made that ruling without the prosecution requesting it.

"The court is clearly acting defacto as a prosecutor," he said.

Royal declined to step down.

"I'm surprised you don't understand the role a judge has in a trial," he said. "You simply don't understand basic rules of evidence."

Royal later cited a rule that a judge has a duty to protect witnesses from "unnecessary embarrassment."

The girl testified that when she was 5, she and her 8-year-old best friend performed oral sex on York. Her friend, now 18, was the first alleged

victim to testify in the trial and described the same alleged incident.

Both girls also said the sex went on repeatedly for years, and happened at least three or four times per week. They said the sex included oral, vaginal and anal sex.

She and her friend would often be on the playground, she said, and York would send Kathy Johnson, who followers called his "main wife," or other older girls to get them. When he was finished with them, she said, he would give them candy and send them back to the girls' quarters.

On Tuesday, a 15-year-old boy the prosecution considers one of York's victims testified that York never molested him. The girl, along with previous witnesses, identified the boy as one of the children they saw York molesting.

York, 58, is facing 13 counts of racketeering and transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes.

In all, 12 former cult members have testified that York molested them as children. Some testified that they were involved in recruiting younger children for York.

Last January, York pleaded guilty to federal charges and to 77 state charges of molestation. The plea agreement would have sent York to prison for 15 years, but a federal judge rejected the sentence as too lenient.

York has not withdrawn his guilty plea to the state charges, though he has not been sentenced and could withdraw his plea before he is sentenced.

York and his followers moved to Putnam County in 1993, where they erected numerous Egyptian-style structures, among them two pyramids and a sphinx. York has alternately claimed to be Muslim, Christian, American Indian and from another planet.

Cult leader painted as conspiracy victim

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution/January 16, 2004
By Bill Torpy

Brunswick -- Several followers of Nuwaubian leader and accused child molester Malachi York testified Thursday that his organization was designed to "uplift" and that his accusers are part of an ongoing effort to discredit him.

"I wholeheartedly feel this is a conspiracy," said Evelyn Rivera, a United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors member since 1977. "They are all liars. I knew them as children. They all lie."

Nine followers of York testified Thursday on the opening day of his defense, which followed seven days of testimony by 14 young women who said they had been molested by York dating back to 1988. York, 58, is on trial in federal court, facing 13 counts of racketeering and molestation.

The first two women called by the defense were a stark contrast with the young accusers, who made up the heart of the prosecution's case. Both Rivera and Samiyra Samad are prim, poised and graying and spoke glowingly of a charismatic leader who spoke truth.

Samad, a registered nurse, said she often examined children on the group's property and never saw signs of molestation. She called York's group a "humanitarian organization that helps people improve their self-esteem."

Samad started listening to York's teachings in 1977 in New York. She later moved to the property in Putnam County that York bought in 1993 and built into a Egyptian-styled community with pyramids and obelisks.

She estimated that more than 1,000 children had been members of the organization and said she

never heard talk of molestations. The mother of three said she joined to get her children in a safe environment.

Witness after witness gave the same answers: No, they did not believe York was God. No, the group was not founded as a cover for molesting children. No, they were not paid and they never expected remuneration -- their needs were all provided for. Yes, they received extensive education.

Nathaniel Washington, whose daughter had testified she often had sex with York and helped provide him with younger victims, said she was usually trustworthy.

Washington knew his daughter was impregnated by York when she was 17 but said he never saw signs that she was molested by him when she was younger.

Nuwaubian members testify York's accusers are untrustworthy

**Associated Press/January 16, 2004
By Russ Bynum**

Brunswick -- Longtime members of Malachi York's quasi-religious cult defended their leader in court Thursday, describing York as a father figure and those who accuse him of child molestation as liars.

"I severely, wholeheartedly feel this is a conspiracy" between York's accusers, said Evelyn Rivera, a member of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors since 1977. "They're all liars. I knew them as children. They all lie."

Rivera was one of nine Nuwaubian members to testify on the opening day of York's defense in U.S. District Court, where he is being tried on 13 counts of child molestation and racketeering.

Most said they joined York, 58, in New York City between 1973 and 1980, when the cult was known as the Ansaru Allah Community. All of them denied any knowledge of York molesting children, but most did not live at the Nuwaubians' Georgia compound when much of the alleged sex occurred.

Samiyra Samad, a registered nurse, joined the cult in 1977 and was responsible for giving children medical examinations and checkups at the rural compound in Eatonton from 2000 to 2002. She said she never knew of York molesting any of them.

"I am a mother. I would not lie for something like that," Samad said. "And I would not lie for him (York)." Jurors heard from 14 of York's alleged victims, boys and girls, who said York

would have sex with them as children and reward them with candy and other gifts. A 16-year-old girl testified York began sodomizing her at age 6.

Defense attorney Adrian Patrick asked each member Thursday about living at the compound, trying to debunk prosecutors' argument that York manipulated his followers into treating him like a god while he kept them in squalor.

Many of the Nuwaubians snickered when Patrick asked if they considered York "to be God or Jesus." They also denied being brainwashed by York.

"He's like a father to all of us," said Raymond Valentine, a Nuwaubian member since 1976.

Over the years, York has incorporated Islam, Judaism, Christianity and space aliens into his teachings. He has unsuccessfully argued he has American Indian heritage and should not be judged by the U.S. court system.

Alleged victims deny any abuse by sect leader

Athens Banner-Herald/January 17, 2004

By Terry Dickson

Brunswick -- Five young women whom the government contends were sexually molested as children by cult leader Dwight "Malachi" York all denied Friday that York ever molested them.

They testified at the end of a stream of defense witnesses on the 10th day of York's federal trial on charges that he operated a continuing criminal enterprise to support his lavish lifestyle and illegal sex. York was arrested May 8, 2002, when the FBI and state agents raided his United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors compound outside Eatonton.

The trial before U.S. District Judge Ashley Royal was transferred to Brunswick because of extensive publicity in the Macon area, where York was to have been tried.

The final witness of the day, an 18-year-old who was born into York's organization in Brooklyn, said she was traumatized when agents descended on the Eatonton compound with drawn guns and ordered everyone to the ground.

"To this day, I still have nightmares about it," she said. "It's scarred on my soul." As did others, the woman said she heard glass breaking and shouted orders.

"I don't think anybody realizes what we went through that day. It was horrible," she said.

She and four other women, including two sisters, denied testimony by earlier witnesses who said they saw York have sex with them when they were children.

The woman acknowledged calling York "Babba," or Father, and said she had heard him referred to as Supreme Grand Master. Asked how she thought of him, the woman said, "Just a regular guy."

Prosecution witnesses have said York's religious philosophies covered Judaic, Islamic, Sumerian, Babylonian, Egyptian and most recently American Indian cultures.

Defense witnesses also identified photos of several of the alleged female victims with Jacob York, Dwight York's estranged son, who lives in the Atlanta area. They went on a trip to Miami's South Beach together and went to the FBI days after returning to Atlanta, defense lawyer Adrian Patrick told the court.

Patrick said he will show that the younger York schemed with those women to bring down his father.

Jacob York was angered when his father refused to give him money to help with his music business, Patrick said.

Jacob York then told his friends, brothers and sisters, "I'm going to get mine, basically," Patrick said.

Patrick noted that all those who stayed with the organization are denying the charges against York - while those ousted from the community are testifying against him.

Regardless of how the federal trial ends, York still has other legal problems ahead.

He has pleaded guilty to 77 counts in the Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit, including child molestation, aggravated child molestation and influencing witnesses, said District Attorney Fred Bright.

Under a plea agreement, York would serve 15 years in prison and 36 years of probation and pay a \$15,000 fine and \$150,000 in restitution to fund counseling and therapy for his victims, Bright said.

That sentence cannot be handed down until after the conclusion of the federal trial, he said. "Under Georgia law, he has the right to withdraw his guilty plea up until the time the state judge signs the sentence," Bright said.

York trial hits third week

Key rulings expected today

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution/January 19, 2004
By Bill Torpy

Brunswick -- Marching bands and local dignitaries will pass the federal courthouse this morning in the annual parade honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

But inside that building -- federal holiday notwithstanding -- will start the third week of the racketeering and molestation trial of Nuwaubian leader and black nationalist Malachi York, a proceeding that has been held under extraordinary security. U.S. District Court Judge Ashley Royal is expected to make two rulings today that are key to York's defense that he has been framed by a massive conspiracy.

Today's proceedings follow testimony by five young women who were named as molestation victims in the indictment but who came to court Friday to deny that York abused them.

York's first legal motion is to allow the testimony of forensic psychologist Phillip Esplin, who has testified in other trials that victims in alleged serial child molestations sometimes make false accusations and can have their testimony crafted by investigators.

Second, the defense wants the judge to let several York followers testify that they met with

York's son, Jacob, who laid out a plan to frame his father, who is the leader of the Middle Georgia-based United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

"Jacob York clearly has a grudge against his father," said defense attorney Adrian Patrick. "Jacob is in the music business and asked his father for money. He didn't give it to him. Jacob has told several people that he's going to get him."

U.S. Attorney Maxwell Wood derided the foreseen testimony as "classic hearsay."

Molestation claims

Prosecutors contend they are the ones facing a conspiracy. Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie handed the judge a videotape taken from the elder York's home that he said shows York followers "inventing stories in case they are called to testify."

Patrick is uncertain whether Malachi York will testify, calling it a "game day decision."

The defense hopes to counter seven days of testimony in which 13 witnesses said they were molested repeatedly by York when they were children. In 1993, York, an ex-con and former Black Panther who founded his organization in 1967, bought a 400-plus-acre property in Putnam County and moved there. The group built Egyptian-themed structures, and more than 200 followers lived there.

Prosecutors say York, 58, used his status as leader of his quasi-religious organization to systematically molest children and gain new victims while also enriching himself with his followers' labor.

Prosecutors allege York employed "a well-developed process of steps" toward molestation that began with "innocent rubbing" and proceeded to intercourse. Wood started the case with graphic evidence -- a stuffed 3-foot-tall Pink Panther doll with a penis that was found next to a king-size bed at the Nuwaubian

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property. Wood, during his presentation, twice tried to hand the doll to a juror who leaned away from the prosecutor. The jury, made up of 11 men and five women, including alternates, has sat grim-faced the past two weeks.

The defense called five young women who were named as molestation victims in York's federal indictment. The women denied they had been sexually molested.

"It seemed [the FBI agent questioning her] wanted me to say something that didn't happen," said Sakina Woods, 21, who still lives on the Putnam property. "They kept asking me over and over and I kept telling them, 'No, no, no.' "

Hanaan Merritt, 18, who lives in Athens, insisted that investigators "basically told us that he molested us. They kept saying, 'No, you're lying.' "

Merritt then scolded the prosecutor, saying she was traumatized by the May 2002 raid on the Nuwaubian property by 300 law enforcement agents. "You wouldn't want your child to go through this," she said.

The defense repeatedly tried to portray the Nuwaubian organization as a spiritual, uplifting group that helped transform a troubled area in New York City and gave followers direction.

Rhea Harris, a New York native who is a nurse in Florida prisons, joined the group 30 years ago and was typical among members in explaining why she joined: "I saw there was peace in a place where no peace was to be found."

Potential protest

There has also been peace near the federal courthouse in Brunswick, which has been ringed by clusters of federal, state and local law enforcement agents, some heavily armed. The courtroom is closed to all but credentialed members of the media. Members of York's group -- usually about 40 each day -- have politely filed in to the courthouse through security and have watched the trial on a closed

circuit TV set up in a courtroom on a different floor.

The judge also has ordered that the jury remain anonymous -- even to defense attorneys and prosecutors -- for fear they may be harassed by Nuwaubians.

Followers of York have packed past hearings in Macon, pounding drums and chanting slogans outside the courthouse. The trial was moved to Brunswick because of extensive media publicity. The judge worried about similar interference from York's followers when about 200 festively dressed Nuwaubians marched in Brunswick's Christmas parade and passed out fliers referring to the trial.

King Day parade organizers say York's followers have not asked to march today.

But Brunswick officials say a Marietta man named Gary Spotted Wolf contacted them to get a permit to protest against the Nuwaubians this week. York through the years has alternately claimed to be a rabbi, a Muslim imam, Egyptian royalty and a space alien. He now claims to be a Creek Indian named Chief Black Thunderbird Eagle.

Spotted Wolf, who says he represents the United Native Americans and has an Indian dance group, says York's group "is a bunch of wannabes" who are besmirching Indian traditions.

"If he's Native American, then I'm Red Chinese," Spotted Wolf said.

Family members of alleged York victim testify that they doubt girl's story

Macon (Ga.) Telegraph/January 20, 2004

By Wayne Crenshaw

Brunswick -- The mother and brother of a girl who earlier testified that Malachi York repeatedly molested her said Monday they don't believe her.

The girl's mother said her daughter is part of "a conspiracy" against York, leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, who is on trial facing 13 federal counts of molestation and racketeering.

"I saw no signs of any molestation whatsoever," the woman told the jury. "I don't believe (she) was molested. All of those young ladies are after money."

The alleged victim's brother gave similar testimony, saying he was close to his sister and often talked to her about problems she was having. He said she never mentioned being molested.

"I do not believe Malachi York molested my sister," he told the jury.

On cross examination, Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie asked the girl's mother if she had seen a medical report on her daughter that indicated a finding consistent with sexual abuse. She said she had not.

"Are you telling the ladies and gentleman of this jury that you made up your mind your daughter is lying, and you didn't even bother to look at the medical report?" he asked.

"Yes," the woman replied.

Both the mother and brother said they are still Nuwaubians and live on the group's compound in Putnam County.

A medical doctor who also is a Nuwaubian testified Monday and disputed the reference "consistent with sexual abuse" cited in the findings of some of the alleged victim's medical reports.

Dr. Frederick Bright said he reviewed all of the medical reports. He indicated he did not find anything that could lead him to conclude the children had been molested.

"When we say 'consistent with' a certain diagnosis, what we say is that it is in agreement with that diagnosis, but it does not give a definitive diagnosis," he said. "Even if there's a 10-percent chance a scar could be from one thing, there's a 90-percent chance it could be something else."

He also gave a lengthy description of what he called "irregularities" in the way the medical reports were done, including what he said were indications of "pre-conceived notions that molestations occurred." But on cross examination, Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephanie Thacker attempted to show that Bright's own opinion was not objective.

She showed him a copy of his application to the Ancient Egyptian Order, one of York's organizations, in which he wrote: "I have tremendous respect and love for the master teacher of our day and time."

Bright acknowledged he was referring to York but insisted that his testimony regarding the medical reports reflected an objective opinion.

Also Monday, York's accountant showed the jury York's federal income tax returns from 1996 to 2001 that indicated a gross income of nearly \$6 million over that time period. His net annual income - the amount after expenses related to operating his businesses are deducted -

ranged from \$70,000 to \$225,000. The income came from four businesses: The Ancient Mystic Order of Melchizedek, Holy Tabernacle Ministries, Holy Tabernacle Stores and rental properties.

Holy Tabernacle Stores, a chain that sells books and other products created by Nuwaubians, was the highest source of income.

Each return also listed York's marital status as single, though witnesses have testified that many women were considered his wives. He also listed no dependents, though federal investigators have said he is believed to have about 100 offspring.

The accountant, Neil Dukoff, was called by the defense to refute the government's racketeering charges against York. Those charges accuse York of splitting cash deposits to avoid depositing more than \$10,000 at one time, which would have to be reported to the IRS.

Dukoff, whose office is in New York, said York could have paid less taxes if he had claimed dependents and that York never tried to file for tax-exempt status as a religious organization.

"He wanted to call it a business," Dukoff said.

But he also stated under cross examination that the tax returns were based on information provided by York's finance office. Dukoff could not say that no criminal activity related to York's finances had occurred.

Also Monday, three men testified that they lived in the same house as some of York's alleged male victims.

All said there was a curfew at dark, that the boys in the house were almost always together, and they did not believe the alleged victims had made late-night trips to York's house, where the alleged victims said they were molested. The defense witnesses also said they had never seen any signs that the boys were being molested.

Accused Cult Leader Earned \$850,000

Children are a large part of the religious sect, which boasts almost 200 members

The Associated Press/January 20, 2004

By Wayne Crenshaw

Brunswick, Ga. -- Cult leader Malachi York earned more than \$850,000 from 1996 to 2001 while hundreds of his followers worked for free on York's Egyptian-styled compound in rural Georgia.

York's accountant showed copies of federal tax returns filed by the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors leader in U.S. District Court on Monday as York's child molestation and racketeering trial entered its third week.

York's returns were shown to the jury as part of his defense to show York, 58, had been paying federal income taxes. In addition to molesting children, prosecutors say, York illegally tried to conceal his finances by evading reporting requirements for large bank deposits.

Tax returns from 1996 to 2001 showed York grossed \$5.9 million from his quasi-religious ministries, book stores and three rental properties in Atlanta, Macon, and in Philadelphia.

After expenses, York reported a net taxable income of \$857,236 during the six-year period and paid \$303,746 in federal income tax. York never claimed tax exemptions for religious or nonprofit purposes.

"We considered everything (to be) for-profit and the client paid taxes on his profit every year," Neil Dukoff, York's accountant, testified after showing the returns to the jury.

Nuwaubians in the News

Meanwhile, York's followers who lived on the 400-acre Nuwaubian compound in Putnam County worked for the cult leader for free.

Several Nuwaubian members testified previously they worked as carpenters and security guards on the compound or in an office set aside to publish York's religious books and other writings. Children have testified they would sometimes work 12-hour days packing soap and incense sold by the Nuwaubians.

Nuwaubian members said they never asked for payment and York provided them with food, clothing and homes in exchange for their work. York reported paying no wages on his tax returns.

York faces 13 federal counts of child molestation and racketeering. Prosecutors have had 13 witnesses testify that York molested them, while five alleged victims have testified the assaults never happened.

On Monday, the mother of one of York's alleged victims told the jury her teenage daughter lied when she said York had sex with her.

The girl left the Nuwaubian compound in 2001 when she was 15. Her mother stayed and still lives there. The mother said her daughter and others who testified against York "are conspirators and they're after money."

"The day that she left, she went down to say goodbye to Malachi York," the mother said. The daughter said York had "wished her well and told her to be safe," the woman said. "If he was a molester, she wouldn't have gone down there to say goodbye."

Muhammad Vasser, 17, told jurors another of York's accusers, a teenage boy, told him at a party last year the cult leader never molested him.

"We just asked him, 'We heard you're speaking against Malachi York,'" said Vasser, who came to the Nuwaubian compound in 1993. "And he

said, 'No, no, it wasn't me. My mother pressured me to do it.'"

An Atlanta gynecologist also testified as an expert in York's defense, saying medical examinations conducted in 2002 on several alleged victims were insufficient to determine they had been molested.

The expert, Dr. Frederick Bright, also acknowledged he lived on the Nuwaubian compound from 1997 to 1999 and still considers York his "teacher."

"I am giving objective opinions completely," Bright said when prosecutors questioned him about his loyalty to York.

Assistant prosecutor Stephanie Thacker showed jurors a copy of Bright's application to join York's group. In it he wrote: "I have tremendous respect and love for the Master Teacher of our Day and Time."

Bright said "Master Teacher" was a reference to York.

York reported no wages paid

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution/January 20, 2004
By Bill Torpy

Brunswick -- Nuwaubian leader Malachi York's organization averaged more than \$1 million a year in receipts for the six years before his 2002 arrest, according to earnings reported to the IRS.

During the years starting in 1996, York, who is accused of molesting youths and fraud, reported in his personal income taxes a net income of \$775,000 and payment of \$305,000 in income taxes, according to testimony in his trial in federal court here. However, none of the more than \$5 million in deductions was for wages paid employees or followers.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie asked York's accountant, Neil Dukoff, if that seemed odd. "Everyone runs their business the way they want to run it," Dukoff responded. "We were not provided with wages paid out."

Dukoff was called by York's defense to counter prosecution claims that he ran the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors as an enterprise to molest children and siphon off money.

"A lot of people in the educational or religious [field] declare themselves nonprofit," said Dukoff. "We never took that stance."

Several York followers already have testified that they worked in York's quasi-religious organization for no pay. Those

testifying for the defense say they expected none, that their living needs were provided for by the organization. Prosecution witnesses say they were expected to work long hours -- filling incense orders, selling books or working on the Nuwaubian compound in Middle Georgia -- for no pay.

York, 58, who founded the organization in New York and moved it to a farm in Putnam County in 1993, is accused of systematically molesting girls and boys in the organization for years.

Dr. Frederick Bright, a professor at the Morehouse School of Medicine, testified that he reviewed files compiled on the alleged victims by investigators and doctors. He characterized much of the reporting as sloppy.

Prosecutors hammered away at Bright's perceived bias, noting that he has belonged to York's organization since 1996 and once lived on the property for two years.

Also, Judge Ashley Royal ruled that the defense can call a psychologist to testify that children who are alleged victims of sexual abuse sometimes can make false accusations if there is "external pressure" on them or "preconceived beliefs on the part of investigators."

Nuwaubian Leader Earned Fat Income While Followers Worked Free

Associated Press/January 20, 2004

Brunswick, Ga. -- Cult leader Malachi York earned more than \$850,000 from 1996 to 2001, while hundreds of his followers worked for free on York's Egyptian-style compound in rural Georgia.

York's accountant showed copies of federal tax returns filed by the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors leader as York's child molestation and racketeering trial entered its third week in U.S. District Court in Brunswick.

York's returns were shown to the jury as part of his defense to show York had been paying federal income taxes.

In addition to molesting children, prosecutors say, York illegally tried to conceal his finances by evading reporting requirements for large bank deposits.

Tax returns from 1996 to 2001 showed York grossed \$5.9 million from his quasi-religious ministries, bookstores and three rental properties in Atlanta, Macon, and in Philadelphia.

York faces 13 federal counts of child molestation and racketeering. Prosecutors have had 13 witnesses testify that York molested them, while five alleged victims have testified the assaults never happened.

Sect leader framed, daughter says

Brother had 'vendetta,' she tells jury

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution/January 21, 2004

By Bill Torpy

Brunswick -- The defense of Nuwaubian leader Malachi York drew to a close Tuesday as an alleged victim testified that she was not molested by York. And York's daughter said her brother concocted a conspiracy to frame his father.

York's daughter, Leah Mabry, 23, said her brother, Jacob, met with her and several alleged victims in May 2001 and told her "that I should go to the FBI and say I was molested by Malachi York."

Mabry said she was never molested by her father, who founded the United Nation of Nuwaubian Moors and moved the quasi-religious organization to a farm in Putnam County in Middle Georgia in 1993.

She said Jacob York "has a vendetta against [his father]. He hates him."

She said York has 15 children "to my knowledge" and then blew a kiss to her father as she left.

York, charged with molestation and racketeering, smiled in response. In the federal court trial, which began Jan. 5, the prosecution has had 13 witnesses testify that they were molested by York while they were children.

Mabry's testimony is one of the keys to the defense: that Jacob was angered when his father refused to lend him money for his music business and conspired to bring York down.

Federal prosecutors contend that Malachi York, 58, ran the organization to molest children and siphon off funds for himself.

Suhaiyla Thomas, an alleged victim listed in the indictment, refuted an FBI report that says she admitted to having been sexually abused by York.

Thomas, whose mother has a daughter by York, is the sixth woman listed as a victim in the indictment to testify that she was never molested by York. Thomas admitted she met with FBI agents for four to six hours during their investigation, but denied she ever told them that she had been molested.

An incredulous Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie waved a document in the air and said, "You are telling the jury that two ladies you never met before made up this six-page statement of what you told them?"

Thomas nodded in agreement.

In other testimony, 9-year-old Elijah Hibner was called, apparently to gain the jury's sympathy for the Nuwaubians, who complain they were victims of a heavy-handed raid when York was arrested in May 2002. The boy rolled right into his testimony and was asked to slow down.

"They stuck guns up to the babies' heads to make them stop crying," he said. Then he quickly added, "They stole some of our food, too."

The case is expected to go to the jury Thursday.

Cult leader's case to go to jury

Macon Telegraph/January 22, 2004
By Mark Niesse

Brunswick, Ga. -- Prosecutors argued that cult leader Malachi York moved children to his compound in Georgia to molest them, while York's attorney said the criminal case was part of a conspiracy to discredit the leader.

The attorneys made their closing arguments Thursday morning. The jury for the child molestation case against York was expected to begin their deliberations later Thursday.

York, 58, is on trial in U.S. District Court for 13 counts of child molestation and racketeering.

During the three-week trial, 14 witnesses testified York molested them while they lived with the Nuwaubian cult, which moved in 1993 from New York to an Egyptian-themed compound in rural Putnam County.

Seven witnesses said on the stand that York did not molest them. Some said the molestation accusations were part of a concocted conspiracy by York's son to frame his father.

In his closing arguments, prosecutor Richard Moultrie called York a corrupt leader who abused peoples' trust.

Defense attorney Adrian Patrick questioned whether it was physically possible for York to have so much sex with alleged victims who took the stand. He used their testimony to show that it would have been absurd for York to have molested children a total of 11,568 times from 1993 to 2001.

Then Patrick displayed a chart showing connections between York's son, Jacob York, and all the victims who testified against York.

"Jacob York has a vendetta against his father," Patrick said. Defense witnesses said Jacob York hated his father because York wouldn't pay for his musical career.

Patrick closed his defense showing pictures of happy young Nuwaubians singing and dancing at a festival. Why, he asked jurors, if there was such widespread molestation, would they be so jubilant?

The jury will consider accusations that York used his cult for his own sexual gratification and monetary enrichment. Members of the group weren't paid for their work - instead, York managed the money and decided who to reward and punish, prosecutors said.

During the deliberations, the jury won't be allowed to leave. During the trial, the jury was not sequestered.

York's trial was moved from Macon to Brunswick because of pretrial publicity. He did not testify in his defense.

Over the years, York has incorporated Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Egyptian mysticism and space aliens into his quasi-religious teachings. He has unsuccessfully argued he has American Indian heritage and should not be judged by the U.S. court system.

His Dream Became Their Nightmare

Dwight York built a black haven in a quiet Georgia town. Relations with locals soured quickly

**Los Angeles Times/January 22, 2004
By Ellen Barry**

Eatonton, GA. -- When Dwight York moved his followers to the heart of Georgia's red-clay dairy

country 11 years ago, the residents of Eatonton didn't know what to expect. The Nuwaubians - as they later called themselves - were urban blacks from Brooklyn, Baltimore and Philadelphia, many of them well-educated and steeped in the politics of black nationalism.

Having looked to the south for a paradise - a place where they could rear children according to their insular, mystical religion - York's followers chose a 476-acre swath of Putnam County. Their new haven was a sleepy county seat best known as home to the fictitious slave Uncle Remus, the invention of a white newspaperman from Eatonton.

On the land, eventually home to 500 people, rose two great pyramids, obelisks, a dun-colored sphinx and a massive gateway covered with hieroglyphics.

At the gate stood armed guards, ready to detain anyone wishing to enter the place they called Tama-Re, Egipt of the West.

Conflicts over the construction grew so tense that observers warned it could erupt into the kind of violence that occurred at the Branch Davidian compound near Waco, Texas.

Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills first challenged the Nuwaubians in a dispute over zoning. But over the course of four years, Sills, who is white, and York circled each other with a sense of gathering threat.

On the streets of Eatonton, Nuwaubians passed out newsletters excoriating municipal officials as racists; city officials, meanwhile, sought to halt construction on the property.

For the last two weeks, the drama has shifted to a courtroom in Brunswick, on the Georgia coast, where York, 58, is on trial on federal charges of racketeering and transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes.

In Eatonton, the unsettling interlude has passed.

Nuwaubians in the News

"The more I think about it, the more it seems like a dream," said Georgia Benjamin Smith, 63, who, as leader of the local chapter of the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People, found herself at odds with the group. "This man was going to take over this county. He was going to take it over."

York's followers arrived all dressed the same, in cowboy boots and 10-gallon hats. Frank Ford, an attorney, recalls the record store the Nuwaubians opened next to his Eatonton office. "It's not often you get a bunch of black folks in the middle of Georgia running around in cowboy suits," said Ford, who litigated for the county against the group in zoning cases. "We have our fair share of eccentrics. We sort of live and let live."

York's followers had reinvented themselves for the journey south. Conceived as Ansaar Pure Sufi, on Bedford Avenue in Brooklyn, they took the name Nubian Islamic Hebrews, according to a group member's website. After York took a trip to Sudan, he renamed the group the Ansaru Allah Community, and ordered his followers to exchange their colorful African robes for Muslim veils and tunics. Their children spoke to no one outside the group, said a police officer who knew them in Brooklyn.

"I can see them marching up and down Bushwick Avenue right now, like a military formation, with women in the Muslim garb surrounding them," said Bill Clark, a retired New York City homicide detective.

Known as "the Lamb" or "the Master," York combined messages of black empowerment with Muslim and Christian beliefs and New Age mysticism. At one point, circulars claimed he came from the planet Rizq in the Illyuwn galaxy; in 2003, he warned, a ship would arrive to save 144,000 believers from apocalypse.

To parents rearing children in crime-ridden neighborhoods, the community offered a disciplined, secure life, said a 26-year-old woman who grew up with the group. Children studied Arabic and looked forward to rituals

such as a nose-ring ceremony, which marked a girl's puberty. >From a young age, they helped out in the community's businesses.

"I looked at it as something blissful, something peaceful," said the woman.

The cowboy motif gave way to an Egyptian theme, and each year on York's birthday, outsiders streamed onto Tama-Re. The Revs. Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton visited, congratulating York on his achievements.

"He put Egypt in the middle of Putnam County," said the Rev. Omer Reid, a Baptist pastor and NAACP leader in nearby Milledgeville. "There were a lot of people who would have paid good money to see what he had built."

As York's followers began to participate in local politics, others bridled. Eatonton's NAACP chapter had a relaxed air, said Smith. "We didn't fuss and fight over nothing," she said. Then a Nuwaubian attended, telling members that Eatonton's blacks were so passive that she would be ashamed to bring her grandchildren to town.

"I began to get riled up," said Smith. "This lady is talking about my county. If she is ashamed to have her grandchildren see us, then there are a lot of exits out of Putnam County, and I would donate my time to arrange a few more."

Nobody was more wary than Sills, who keeps a verse from Proverbs in his office: "The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as the lion."

Sills became sheriff just as York declared the property a sovereign nation, complete with an independent currency and a visa system for visitors. Discovering that York ran a nightclub on the property, local authorities acted to shut it down.

Two years later, when Sills went to deliver a court order demanding that the group allow county inspections, armed guards blocked his vehicle, he said. >From then on, Sills said, violence was a real possibility.

Nuwaubians in the News

"I know what happened in 1861, when my ancestors did the same thing," Sills said. "When a group of people declares, 'We're a sovereign nation, we're not subject to the law' and blood is getting ready to be spilled."

Sills was not the first law enforcement officer to scrutinize York's group. A 1993 FBI report in Sills' files described York's philosophy as "extremely militant black nationalism" and described his "control [over] the lives and thinking processes" of his followers. The report details York's criminal history, which includes convictions for statutory rape, assault with a dangerous weapon and application for a fraudulent passport.

In 1998, Sills received an anonymous letter alleging that York was having sex with children. Three years later, York was arrested in a parking lot in Milledgeville. He was indicted on child-sexual abuse charges. That night, 300 deputies and federal agents raided Tama-Re.

On Jan. 14, the 14th alleged victim, a narrow-shouldered 16-year-old, took the stand to describe sexual abuse that she said began with fondling when she was 5 and progressed to anal sex the following year.

Adrian Patrick, York's defense attorney, has said the allegations are a conspiracy between local authorities and a group of angry former members led by York's son. Six alleged victims listed by prosecutors in the indictment have taken the stand to deny the abuse reports. Closing arguments are expected today.

Locals say York's influence in the county faded after his arrest, and authorities say only about two dozen followers remain on the land. Still, in certain Eatonton homes, people shrug off the trial in Brunswick as another chapter in racial relations in the Deep South.

"The sheriff ain't never been with them," said Charlie Dorsey, a 69-year-old retired truck driver, who is black. "They were the only black race that stood up against the sheriff."

Hearing his comments, the NAACP's Smith sighed. The wounds are far from healed, she said. Eatonton's NAACP chapter collapsed this year; first the founding members left, alarmed by the influx of Nuwaubians. Then, the Nuwaubians left.

Smith has called a meeting a couple weeks from now for a new organization. The chapter will be starting from scratch.

York found guilty of child molestation and racketeering

The Associated Press/January 23, 2004

Brunswick, Ga. -- A jury found cult leader Malachi York guilty on Friday of 10 of the 11 child molestation and racketeering counts against him.

York, 58, was found innocent of one count of transporting minors across state lines for unlawful sexual activity. This charge had claimed York abused children during a trip to Disney World.

The jurors, who reached their initial verdict after seven hours of deliberation, went back into court chambers to consider two remaining counts of property forfeiture. York could face up to 80 years in prison when sentenced, prosecutors said.

During the three-week trial, 14 girls and boys said York molested them from 1998 through 2002, when federal agents raided the compound.

I'm very proud of the victims. I admire them and I'm very pleased for them. It is their victory, prosecutor Richard Moultrie said.

The government claimed York recruited older girls to groom younger girls for sex with him, and that he used the cult for his own financial gain. Members of the group weren't paid for their work _ instead, York managed the money and decided who to reward and punish, prosecutors said.

If girls pleased York, they would get prizes like diamond rings from Wal-Mart or trips outside the compound to a restaurant, according to testimony. If they angered him, they would be forced to live on rationed food and would have

to fill out forms for necessities like sanitary napkins and doctors visits.

Defense attorney Adrian Patrick unsuccessfully argued that the witnesses who claimed they were molested concocted their stories as part of a conspiracy by York's son to frame his father. Defense witnesses said Jacob York hated his father because York wouldn't pay for his musical career.

Patrick also said the government was out to get the mostly black Nuwaubian sect because their beliefs were different from the mainstream.

The guilty verdicts could lead to the end of the Nuwaubians because they also allow the government to seize parts of his neo-Egyptian compound in middle Georgia. Some Nuwaubians still live on the 476 acres of land in Eatonton, which is decorated with pyramids, a sphinx and statues of American Indians.

York's trial was moved from Macon to Brunswick because of pretrial publicity. He did not testify in his defense.

The anticipated Nuwaubian protests never materialized _ York's followers quietly watched the trial on a TV in a separate courtroom, as ordered by Judge Ashley Royal. When the verdict was read, the 40 Nuwaubians watching the television were calm and had little reaction.

Heavily armed police patrolled outside the courthouse to curtail any incidents. At past court hearings, Nuwaubians dressed as Egyptian pharaohs, mummies and birds while beating on drums.

Over the years, York has incorporated Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Egyptian mysticism and space aliens into his quasi-religious teachings. He has unsuccessfully argued he has American Indian heritage and should not be judged by the U.S. court system.

Sect leader guilty of molestation

Atlanta Journal-Constitution/January 24, 2004

By Bill Torpy

Brunswick -- Nuwaubian leader Malachi York has been called Dr. York, Isa Muhammad, Baba, The Master Teacher and The Savior.

But after his conviction Friday in federal court on racketeering and molestation-related charges, U.S. Attorney Maxwell Wood referred to York in more earthly terms: "He is Dwight York, a con man from Brooklyn, New York."

Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills, who has investigated York for the past six years, said authorities "have sent away not a savior but one of the most heinous criminals of the history of this nation."

The 58-year-old leader of the Putnam County-based United Nation of Nuwaubian Moors could spend the rest of his life behind bars.

A jury of nine men and three women deliberated seven hours over two days to convict York of four counts of racketeering and six child molestation-related charges. Prosecutors say York would likely be sentenced in March to between 20 and 30 years. "It's an appropriate sentence . . . in light of the viciousness of the crimes," Wood said. "You have 14 victims and we believe many more."

The jury also voted that the government could seize York's interests in a mansion in Athens and a 476-acre farm near Eatonton because of the racketeering conviction. Another hearing will be held to determine what the government can seize, said Wood.

York showed no reaction when the verdict was read. Nor did about 40 members of his organization, who have watched the three-week

trial on closed circuit TV in another courtroom. The judge closed the courtroom to all but credentialed media to avoid disruptions from York's followers.

York's attorney, Adrian Patrick, described his client as being "upbeat" and "relieved the case was over."

Patrick said York asked him to tell his followers "it would be all right." None would speak after the verdict.

The jury did not buy defense contentions that York was framed by a conspiracy concocted by his son, Jacob, a music producer who'd had a falling out with his father.

Jacob York said Friday he did not know most of the victim witnesses and had not talked with them, much less conspired with them. "But I'm flattered that he thinks I'm that smart," he said. "Justice for the innocents has finally been done."

The defense called six alleged victims who were named in the indictment against York. They testified they had not been molested but had been pressured by investigators to say they had been. Other Nuwaubians tried to attack the credibility of the molestation victims. One witness for York called her daughter, who testified she was molested by York, "a liar."

Prosecutors described a culture where York was the unquestioned ruler and a godlike figure for his quasi-religious organization, which he founded in New York and moved to Middle Georgia in 1993.

York used teachings from Christianity, Islam, Judaism and mixed them with stories of extraterrestrial beings and ancient Egypt. The Putnam property was adorned with pyramids, obelisks and even a sphinx. More than 200 followers lived on the land at one point, with children separated from their parents.

"York's strategy was to break apart the family, to make the family secondary to him," said Wood. Prosecutors argued York had older victims

groom younger children to become his sexual partners. He used pornographic cartoons, gave them candy and jewelry and had a Pink Panther doll with a penis to "desensitize them to sexual experiences," said Wood.

Sills said it was extremely difficult to get molestation victims to come forward. He said he received reports in 1997 that young girls from the property were having babies. He said investigators have found evidence that York fathered more than 100 children.

In 1998, Sills and other Putnam officials, who were then battling the Nuwaubians over a building code violation, received letters that York was molesting the children of his followers. But the first victim did not come forward until 2001, Sills said. York was arrested in May 2002.

"It was like another nation," Sills said, "a nation behind an iron curtain."

Dawn Baskin, a Putnam County prosecutor, said the 13 young men and women who testified against York were courageous for breaking away from the hold of their families, friends and the organization. "They pointed a finger and said 'Yes, you did.' That is the true picture of a hero."

York had pleaded guilty to federal and state charges and was to have gotten 15 years, with the prison terms to run concurrently. However, a federal judge said 15 years was too lenient. York's guilty plea to 77 state charges still stands.

Nuwaubian leader guilty

Molestation, racketeering conviction

Athens Banner-Herald/January 24, 2004
By Terry Dickson

Brunswick -- A federal jury convicted cult leader Dwight "Malachi" York on 10 counts of child molestation and racketeering and forfeited his property, including a house in Athens, to the government.

The nine-man, three-woman jury deliberated about seven hours over two days before returning its verdict that the head of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors transported minors across state lines to have unlawful sex, hid cash transactions from the government and ran a continuing criminal enterprise.

Depending on the outcome of a pre-sentencing investigation, York faces from 20 to 30 years in federal prison, said Maxwell Wood, U.S. attorney for the Middle District of Georgia. The case was moved to Brunswick from Macon because of extensive publicity there.

York sat impassively as the verdict was read and his defense lawyer, Adrian Patrick, said later that York was upbeat, relieved that the case is over and looking forward to an appeal.

"This is Mr. York's first step toward freedom," Patrick said. "It was a miracle for us to have the jury contemplate the case for as long as they did."

York's victims testified that he had begun molesting them as children in New York and that the abuse got worse after he moved his flock to a 440-acre farm near Eatonton in 1993.

Fourteen victims, ranging from teenage boys to women, said York had molested them and compelled them to watch others have sex. In

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addition to the testimony, prosecutors introduced exhibits including pornographic tapes and comic books and a stuffed Pink Panther doll with male genitals sewn on.

Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills expressed relief that a case his office has investigated since 1997 was finally over.

"This has been an ordeal, not just for me personally but for my office, my staff and the people of my county," he said. "The people of this county have sent away not a savior but one of the most heinous criminals in the history of this nation."

Wood was especially emotional as he spoke of York's cowardice in calling the young son of followers as a witness.

"He sent a 9-year-old boy in to testify and he didn't have the guts to testify himself," he said.

And he lashed out at York's practice of calling himself Malachi Z. York, master teacher and leader of the Nuwaubian nation. York has also called himself Isa Muhammad, Isa Al Haadi Al Mahdi, Baba and most recently, Black Thunder Eagle, chief of a Creek Native-American tribe, as he jumped around religious philosophies to include Judaic, Islamic, Babylonian, Sumerian and Egyptian.

Wood said York is none of those.

"He's Dwight York, a con man out of New York," Wood said.

Dawn Baskin, an assistant district attorney for the Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit, said York is an amazingly smart pedophile who ran his religious organization in a way to avoid detection.

By pulling Nuwaubian children out of public schools, he avoided their making contact with teachers and counselors who could detect the abuse, she said. His religious practice of separating men from women and children from their parents prevented children from telling their parents about the abuse, Baskin said.

And York fathered some of his ardent supporters.

There was testimony that York had multiple wives and had fathered numerous children outside of marriage.

During a raid on the Eatonton compound, investigators found a chart and photos of the women York had impregnated and their children, Sills said. A conservative estimate says York likely fathered at least 100 children, Sills said.

There had been some apparent hope for York about noon Friday when the jury foreman sent out a note saying that a juror had cited a case in which someone had been convicted of child molestation and later found innocent. As a result, the juror was refusing to deliberate those charges, the note said.

The other jurors said asked that the juror be replaced with an alternate, but U.S. District Judge Ashley Royal instead called the jury back into the courtroom and again read them a portion of his charge to deliberate in the case and consider only the evidence.

After the verdict was returned, the juror who had complained confirmed she that voted for the guilty verdicts.

Forty-five of York's followers heard the verdict read in a third floor courtroom where they have watched the trial via closed circuit TV. At the reading of the first guilty verdict on a charge of conspiracy to commit racketeering, a woman caught her breath sharply but there was not another sound as they heard nine more pronouncements of guilt.

The jury acquitted York of only one count of transporting minors for unlawful sex. The jury also found him guilty of racketeering, conspiracy to transport minors for unlawful sex, two counts of transporting minors for unlawful sex, traveling interstate to engage in unlawful sex and three charges of structuring cash transactions to avoid reporting requirements.

Among the rows of somber followers, a few men sat with their heads in their hands and a few women wiped tears. One woman who had been in court all 15 days left with tears in her eyes.

Some of the defense witnesses had testified that they still live "on the land," as they called the compound with its 19 acres of dwellings.

On the day of the raid, there were about 100 people there, more than half of them children, Sills said. The number has dropped every time York had a legal setback until there are very few left, according to Sills.

Although the jury ordered York's assets forfeited, the government can't just take ownership immediately, Wood said.

York has transferred ownership of the compound to two of his followers and the legality of that and other issues must be considered, Sills said.

Trial puts an end to York's 'regular days'

Macon Telegraph/January 24, 2004
By Wayne Crenshaw

The diminutive 16-year-old girl walked up to the witness stand as the last person to testify in the main part of the government's case against cult leader Malachi York.

Her name was well-known to jurors, since numerous other witnesses had called her one of his favorite victims. In a soft, matter-of-fact voice, she told her appalling story of years of sexual abuse by York, starting when she was 5.

But her most compelling answer came after York's attorney, Adrian Patrick, asked her about a particular time York was allegedly molesting her and another girl.

"You're going to have to be a little more specific," the girl said. "That sounds like a regular day."

Lead prosecutor Richard Moultrie made dramatic use of that comment in his closing argument last week: He told members of the jury they could put those "regular days" to an end forever by convicting York.

The jury members apparently took Moultrie's passionate closing argument to heart. They convicted York on nine of 10 counts of racketeering and transporting children across state lines for sexual purposes.

They also came back with a "yes" verdict on one of three counts calling for forfeiture of York's interest in the 467-acre United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors compound in Putnam County.

The three-week federal trial included 14 women, men and teenagers telling the jury graphic tales of York's sexual appetite for children, which included vaginal, oral and anal sex. Jurors even saw a short, animated pornographic video seized during a search of York's home on the compound.

A male victim testified that York showed him that video before molesting him for the first time on his seventh birthday. He said he remembered it because the video showed a devil character having graphic sex with women.

"I'll never forget that," the witness testified. "It's burned into my brain."

The trial began with U.S. Attorney Max Wood asking an FBI agent to unseal a cardboard evidence box. The agent had testified that the contents of the box had been seized at a "Jacuzzi room" near York's home on the compound.

But the jury didn't know what was in the box until Wood pulled out a 3-foot tall, stuffed Pink Panther.

The doll had male genitalia sewn onto it.

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"Why would a grown man need a Pink Panther doll with a penis?" Moultrie asked the jury in his closing argument.

The doll was mentioned only briefly by a couple of witnesses, who identified it as a fixture in York's bedroom. But that sort of evidence, Wood said, was a crucial part of the government's case. "In this day and age, jurors want more than somebody saying somebody did something," Wood said. "They want to see physical evidence."

The "he said/she said" aspect of many child-molestation cases makes them difficult to prosecute. But the government faced a peculiar hurdle in York's three-week trial: The defense put up parents and siblings of some of the children who testified for the government, and they called their own family members liars.

York, 58, brought his group to Putnam County in 1993. It began in Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1967, but changed frequently. It started as a Muslim group, but York has also taught Christian and Jewish theology. Followers have dressed as cowboys, American Indians and claimed ties to ancient Egypt. York once wrote a book claiming he was an alien from the planet Rizq.

Despite the fact that York had pleaded guilty to state and federal charges almost exactly one year ago, he still has many devoted followers. The defense called 42 witnesses, nearly all Nuwaubians. Many were well spoken, educated and expressed absolute confidence that York's accusers are liars.

"I truly and wholeheartedly believe it's a conspiracy," said 52-year-old Evelyn Rivera.

Some of York's followers have been harassing former members who testified for the government, said Wood. Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills said an investigation is under way.

Nuwaubians have also been handing out common-law lawsuits against Sills and others. "This has been an ordeal not just for me

personally, but for my staff and the community," Sills said.

The case is far from over. Patrick said the federal conviction will be appealed and expressed confidence that there are several legitimate grounds. Wood disputed that.

Patrick said York will withdraw his guilty plea to the state charges and will take that case to trial.

But Sills seemed confident that the testimony of the defense witnesses will fare no better in state court than in the federal trial: "It's fairly apparent there was a lack of veracity on the part of the cookie-cutter witnesses called by the defense."

In a news conference after the trial Friday, Sills said he first looked into child-molestation allegations against York eight years ago. He was asked why parents would side with York over their own children.

"At one time I tried to figure out why people would follow somebody blindly," he said. "Then I just investigated."

Nuwaubians claim right to issue official documents

Macon Telegraph/February 22, 2004
By Liz Fabian

Members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, now calling themselves the Yamassee Native American Moors of the Creek Nation, claim they have the right to issue their own official documents.

But local law enforcement and Georgia regulators disagree.

Michael Jenkins, who said he is an officer of the group, told the Macon City Council last week that the Yamassee had "entered into a treaty" with the state to issue its own driver's licenses, birth certificates and automobile license plates.

He told council members they would be seeing the Yamassee license plates around the city.

However, Department of Motor Vehicle Safety spokeswoman Susan Sports said no other agency besides the DMVS can legally produce driver's licenses or license plates.

"Our agency is the only agency allowed to produce a legal document recognized by law enforcement as a Georgia driver's license," Sports said.

Although an organization can create its own specialty license plate, it applies through the DMVS, posts a \$50,000 fidelity bond and has 1,000 applicants willing to purchase the proposed license plate.

Sports said Friday the state had not received a specialized license plate application from the Yamassee Native American Government.

When reached by the Telegraph, Jenkins said: "The only thing I can say right now is that proper notification was given."

Jenkins said he sent documents to Macon Mayor Jack Ellis, Police Chief Rodney Monroe, Bibb County Sheriff Jerry Modena and the Bibb County Board of Commissioners' office.

"A portion of the treaty text was also sent which describes the authorization process from the State Department and the State of Georgia," Jenkins said.

When told the DMVS had no such application, he replied: "Well, possibly in the future we can discuss the situation, but right now that's the only comments I have."

Macon police already have issued citations after spotting one of the Yamassee plates.

"I have a book from the State Department that includes all the foreign entities, and they're not in there," Monroe said.

On Feb. 10, a Macon police officer stopped a red 1994 Mercury Grand Marquis with a red Yamassee license plate at the corner of Second Street and Edgewood Avenue, according to a police report.

The car is registered to Kevin Anthony Love of Macon, but the man presented an identification card stating his name as Sekhem Re Khem Love El. He also presented a packet of papers indicating he had diplomatic immunity, the report said.

"From what I understand the documents were made on a computer. It was like a (dealer) drive-out tag, and it had one of the names of their tribe," said Melanie Hofmann, Macon police spokeswoman. "They're using a computer to generate licenses and identification."

The officer determined Love was the man's real name and that he had been issued a proper Georgia tag, the report said.

According to the report, Love was uncooperative and refused to provide proof of insurance.

The officer wrote Love citations for driving with no license on person, no proof of insurance, improper tag display, possession of false driver's license and hindering police, the report stated.

In response to a Telegraph inquiry Friday about the traffic stop, Love said: "I have to get together with my counselor first and maybe we can get together next week."

Bibb County Sheriff's Lt. David Davis said he was not aware of any citations issued in Bibb County connected with Yemassee license plates or documents.

"They're using the same tactics as some of these militia and anti-government groups," Davis said.

The Nuwaubians began in 1967 in Brooklyn, N.Y., as a Muslim community. Cult leader Malachi York later moved the group to upstate New York, then to Putnam County in 1993. The group's ideology has undergone several shifts, claiming ties at various times to Christians, Jews, ancient Egyptians, cowboys and American Indians. At one time, York claimed to be an alien from another planet.

Sentencing date set for Nuwaubian leader

Athens Banner-Herald/February 28, 2004

Sentencing has been set for March 26 for Dwight "Malachi" York, the leader of the quasi-religious Nuwaubian Nation of Moors sect, who was convicted of molesting children at the group's compound and an Athens mansion.

York was convicted Jan. 23 on multiple counts of child molestation and racketeering in Brunswick, where the U.S. District Court trial was moved because of pretrial publicity.

York's lawyer, Adrian Patrick, said he would fight for the shortest sentence possible. He said he also is working on an appeal, which won't be able to be argued until after sentencing.

Prosecutors have said York, 58, will likely get between 20 and 30 years in prison.

York still faces 77 state charges of child molestation, to which he pleaded guilty as part of a plea agreement a year ago. Patrick has said his client plans to withdraw those pleas.

Cult leader, molester to learn fate in May

Sentencing postponed

Athens Banner-Herald/March 27, 2004

By Joe Johnson

Sentencing for convicted child molester and cult leader Dwight "Malachi" York that was supposed to have taken place Friday in federal court in Macon has been rescheduled for May 18, U.S. Department of Justice Spokeswoman Pamela Lightsey said.

The reason for the change is because a motion has been filed to have Athens attorney Adrian Patrick removed as York's attorney. A hearing on that motion is set for 10 a.m. May 14, Lightsey said.

An additional hearing is scheduled for May 19, at which time a determination will be made how much financial restitution York owes the government because of tax fraud.

York, the 58-year-old leader of the quasi-religious United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors sect, was convicted of molesting children at the group's Putnam County compound as well as at his Athens mansion.

A jury in U.S. District Court in Brunswick on Jan. 23 found York guilty of conspiracy, racketeering, conspiracy to transport minors for unlawful sex, two counts of transporting minors for unlawful sex, traveling interstate to engage in unlawful sex and three charges of structuring cash transactions to avoid reporting requirements.

Although pre-trial proceedings had been held in Macon, the trial was moved to Brunswick due to defense claims of unfair pre-trial publicity. Prosecutors have said York will likely get between 20 and 30 years in prison. He still faces 77 state charges of child molestation, to which

he pleaded guilty as part of a plea agreement a year ago.

Cult leader's companion sentenced in molestation case

The Macon Telegraph/April 13, 2004

By Sharon E. Crawford

A companion of cult leader and convicted child molester Malachi York will spend two years in prison after pleading guilty Tuesday to molesting four children.

Though not legally married, prosecutors describe Kathy Johnson as the "main wife" of York, leader of the United Nuwaubian Nations of Moors, a quasi-religious sect based on a sprawling, Egyptian-themed compound in Putnam County.

As part of the plea agreement in Putnam Superior Court, federal prosecutors agreed to drop their case against Johnson, said Dawn Baskin, an assistant district attorney in the Ocmulgee Circuit.

Johnson, 35, was taken to the Putnam County Jail after pleading guilty to seven counts of child molestation.

Superior Court Judge William A. Prior sentenced Johnson to 20 years in prison - two of which must be served with the remainder on probation. Johnson was also banished from Georgia, except for Clayton County, and will not get any credit for the five months she spent in federal custody in 2002.

"Many of the victims in this case are just ready for this to be over with," Baskin said. "We have

victims calling us and begging us to bring this to an end."

Sect Leader Gets 135 Years for Molestation

Associated Press/April 22, 2004
By Elliott C. McLaughlin

Atlanta -- The leader of a quasi-religious sect was sentenced Thursday to 135 years in prison for molesting boys and girls at the group's ancient Egyptian-style compound.

Malachi York, the 58-year-old "Master Teacher" of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, will also have to forfeit the 476-acre compound, adorned with pyramids and a sphinx.

He was convicted in January of child molestation and racketeering after a trial in which 14 boys and girls from the sect said York molested them from 1998 to 2002. He was sentenced in Macon by U.S. District Judge C. Ashley Royal.

"We're very pleased with the sentence," U.S. Attorney Max Wood said.

The sect was founded as a Muslim commune in New York and moved to Eatonton in 1993, where York set himself up as a messiah figure.

Prosecutors said he recruited older girls to groom younger girls for sex with him.

If girls pleased York, they got prizes such as diamond rings from Wal-Mart or trips to a restaurant, witnesses testified. If they angered him, their food was rationed and they had to fill out forms for necessities such as sanitary napkins and doctor's visits.

Members of the group were not paid for their work - instead, York managed the money and decided who would be rewarded and who would be punished, prosecutors said.

York's attorney, Adrian Patrick, had argued that York was framed by his own son for refusing to fund the son's musical career. The defense had also argued that the government was out to get the mostly black sect because its beliefs were outside the mainstream.

York incorporated Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Egyptian mysticism and space aliens into his teachings.

Earlier this month, Kathy Johnson, York's "main wife," was placed on 18 years of probation for child molestation.

Judge throws book at cultist

135 years in prison ordered

Atlanta Journal-Constitution/April 22, 2004
By Bill Torpy

Macon - A federal judge sentenced Nuwaubian leader Dwight "Malachi" York on Thursday to 135 years in prison for racketeering and child molestation convictions.

"Isn't that the statutory maximum?" one of York's lawyers asked U.S. District Judge Ashley Royal.

"The statutory maximum is life," Royal responded.

The 58-year-old York won't be eligible for early release until 2119. The courtroom exchange seemed a bit odd, but somehow fitting in light of a case that included faux Egyptian pyramids on Middle Georgia farmland, costumed followers

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beating drums outside court hearings and York's claims he was, alternately, an Indian chief, a rabbi and a being from another world.

York, who had been found guilty of molesting children over many years, chuckled upon hearing the sentence.

"I'll probably get life," York told the judge in a rambling statement before the sentence was announced. "It's convenient to you all to get a man like me off the streets."

The leader of the quasi-religious United Nation of Nuwaubian Moors, York claimed he was persecuted for being different. "This is not a molestation case, this is not a RICO case, this is a religious case," said York, whose followers have called him Dr. York, Isa Muhammad, Baba, the Master Teacher and the Savior. He spoke rapidly for several minutes and was asked twice by his attorneys to slow down.

"I can't say I'm surprised" by the sentence, said U.S. Attorney Maxwell Wood, who after the conviction in January estimated the sentence would be 20 to 30 years. York was convicted of four counts of racketeering and six child molestation-related charges.

In 2003, York pleaded guilty to state and federal charges and received concurrent 50-year sentences, to serve at least 15 years in prison. But a federal judge found the deal too lenient, and York wound up going to trial.

A separate case in Putnam County Superior Court remains to be resolved.

Federal prosecutors will hold a hearing today on seizing the 476-acre farm York's group bought near Eatonton in 1993. The organization also owns a mansion in Athens. Any money seized could go to victims or to investigation agencies.

During the trial, prosecutors described a culture where York was the unquestioned ruler and a godlike figure of an organization he founded in a crime-infested area in Brooklyn, N.Y., more than 30 years ago. He moved the group to

Putnam County in 1993, building a series of pyramids, obelisks and statues.

About 25 followers sat quietly in the courtroom Thursday for the sentencing. Perhaps 15 more stood outside.

York mixed teachings from Christianity, Islam and Judaism with stories of extraterrestrial beings and ancient Egypt.

More than 200 followers lived on the land at one time, with children separated from their parents. Witnesses said they lived in dilapidated housing while York lived in relative opulence.

Fourteen witnesses - male and female - testified during the trial that York molested them. Some said the abuse started when they were as young as 5.

One witness during the trial looked up at an enlarged photo of herself laughing and wearing a party hat for her eighth birthday. Two months after that photo was taken, the woman testified, she was taken to York's home and shown pornography by an older girl. "I was told that's what I'm supposed to do to York," she said.

Putnam Sheriff Howard Sills, who started investigating York in 1997 after getting anonymous letters describing abuse, said, "It gives me great pleasure to know he'll miss the rest of his life and that I was a part of that."

York supporters say tape proves his innocence

Macon Telegraph/April 23, 2004
By Sharon E. Crawford

Supporters of Malachi York gave reporters a videotape Thursday that they say proves the cult leader's innocence.

The tape appears to show a woman who originally testified that she was molested by York. The tape seemed to show her recanting testimony she gave in January that she had been sexually molested by York. In the videotape, the woman says she was coerced into testifying by one of York's sons.

Also Thursday, York's new defense team said part of its request for a new trial hinged on testimony from an alleged victim. But defense lawyer Jonathan Marks declined to say if that person is the same one depicted on the tape.

The videotape displayed Sunday's date. It was given to The Telegraph and WSB-TV, Channel 2, of Atlanta, at a news conference outside the federal courthouse Thursday.

"It's time for the truth to come out," the woman says in the video statement. "I'm here because I'm trying to do the right thing."

Testimony in York's January trial featured several witnesses who initially told investigators they had been molested by York but recanted, and others who had at first denied being abused, then later testified that they had. Prosecutors had more than 40 witnesses who testified against York, 13 of whom said he had molested them.

The woman said she went to prosecutors initially because she was worried about losing her children. She said she feared that if she did not cooperate, she also would be prosecuted.

U.S. Attorney Max Wood said the woman was not considered a main witness in the case and declined further comment. He said the first time he heard that the woman had changed her statement was Thursday in court. Wood heard it from York, who said in court that the videotape proved him innocent of sexual molestation charges.

In January, the woman on the tape testified at York's trial that he had molested her from the time she was 13.

The woman could not be reached for comment Thursday. Prosecutors said she now lives with her family in New York.

In the taped statement, the woman said she had consensual sex with York. On the tape, the woman did not say at what age she started having sex with York.

"I want to tell the truth behind all of the lies," the woman said in her taped statement.

York's supporters would not elaborate on where the tape was made or any other details about its production. When pressed for details, a supporter simply said: "Watch the tape."

Cult Leader's Sentence Spurs Job Resignations

Macon Officials Say York's Sentence Out of Their Hands

Associated Press/April 27, 2004

Macon -- Seven Macon police officers, who call themselves supporters of the leader of a quasi-religious sect, have resigned from their jobs, saying Macon Mayor Jack Ellis refused to help them combat a conspiracy against the leader.

Malachi York, the 58-year-old "Master Teacher" of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, was sentenced last week to 135 years in federal prison after being convicted in January on multiple counts of child molestation and racketeering.

Macon Police Chief Rodney Monroe said seven of his officers resigned Monday, along with an officer in training and a firefighter.

"I've accepted their resignations, although I would not like to see them go," Monroe said. "Each one of those officers have served the department and the city well."

Former officer Joseph Hibner said they have new information that proves York's innocence, but city officials and the news media have refused to listen.

"We've been trying to tell the city of Macon and the world at large about this new evidence," Hibner said. "We know for a fact that it was a conspiracy against Malachi York."

At issue is a video tape that shows a woman who originally testified that she was molested by York. On the tape, she says she was coerced into giving that testimony by one of York's sons.

"The reason for resignation is that we will not continue to risk our lives in support of a city and mayor that turns their back to obvious injustices," Hibner said. "A taped confession came into our possession, and we tried to bring this evidence of criminal activity to their attention ... The city of Macon and their biased media affiliates are aiding the prosecution in hiding the truth from the public."

But City Council President Anita Ponder said there is nothing the city can do to help the officers exonerate York.

"The York situation is a federal case," and must be appealed through the federal courts, Ponder said. "As a city, I don't think there is anything we can do to help them."

Recanted testimony prompts delay

Nuwaubian restitution hearing

Athens Banner-Herald/April 29, 2004

Macon -- A key government witness in a cult leader's sexual abuse and racketeering case has recanted her testimony, but a judge told her Friday she will have to wait to tell her story.

Malachi York, head of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, was sentenced to 135 years in federal prison largely because of the testimony of cult members who said York, 58, regularly molested children and manipulated the sect's finances.

U.S. District Judge C. Ashley Royal postponed a Friday restitution hearing because, he said, he wanted to research whether Habiba Washington can take the stand during the hearing to recant her testimony. The U.S. Attorney's Office, which prosecuted the case, doesn't believe

Washington's testimony is pertinent to the hearing.

"If Habiba Washington has now recanted, it is irrelevant to what we are doing today," Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Moultrie said.

York, who also forfeited property in Eatonton and Athens as part of his sentence, is not eligible for release until 2139.

York's attorney, Jonathan Marks, said Washington was one of three prosecution witnesses who now say they were not molested by York. Before the Friday hearing, York supporters sent videotapes to several media outlets showing Washington recanting her testimony.

U.S. Attorney Maxwell Wood said he had not seen the tape.

"He's playing to the media," Wood said. "The fact that they gave a videotape to the media but not us should say something."

After Royal said he was postponing the case, York accused the judge of "holding a person down." Royal did not say when the hearing would be rescheduled.

The prosecution's only witness Friday, Dr. Richard Laurence Elliott, a professor at Mercer University, said he surveyed 22 victims, and four of them said they had not been abused.

Most, though, claimed they were abused by York and others, he said. Among them, a 17-year-old who had been molested at age 12.

York's attorneys seeking new trial

The Macon Telegraph/May 25, 2004
By Sharon E. Crawford

Attorneys for convicted child molester and cult leader Malachi York have asked a federal judge for a new trial, citing new evidence they say could clear their client.

Monday, York's attorneys asked U.S. District Court Judge C. Ashley Royal for a new trial based on an affidavit from a woman recanting her testimony in January that York molested her and then she solicited other children to have sex with York.

The motion was filed last week, but a new motion was filed Monday after defense attorneys received an updated affidavit from the woman.

York is the leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a quasi-religious group based in Putnam County.

On April 22 - the day York was sentenced to 135 years in federal prison - his supporters produced a videotape of the woman saying she was never molested and was coerced into testifying by York's son, Jacob York.

In the affidavit, the woman says Jacob York coerced her into making up a story of abuse and that she worked with other victims to make sure their stories were similar.

"I take her at her word," York's new attorney, Jonathan Marks, said Monday. "She said she really didn't understand it would go this far and she wants to right this awful wrong."

Marks said he's hoping to get a hearing to discuss the need for a new trial. Federal prosecutors did not return phone calls seeking comment Monday.

"This startling evidence could not have been discovered until after the trial," Marks said in his motion. "(York's attorney) sought diligently to obtain exculpatory evidence to present at trial. Indeed, he was successful in calling several alleged victims whom (witnesses) claimed to have seen having sex with (the) defendant when they were minors."

Marks said the female witness was the first to come forward saying she did not tell the truth at trial. Marks said that since he took over as York's attorney, he's talked to several alleged victims whose names were brought up during the trial.

"I haven't talked to every one of the victims who testified during the trial, but I have talked to some who were named as victims," Marks said. "Quite a number have said they were not victimized."

York, 58, began his organization in 1967 in Brooklyn, N.Y., as a Muslim community. He later moved it to upstate New York, then to Putnam County in 1993.

The group's ideology has undergone several shifts, claiming ties at various times to Christians, Jews, ancient Egyptians and American Indians. At one time, York claimed to be an alien from another planet.

Beginning in 1998, the Nuwaubians and Putnam County officials engaged in a public battle over county zoning requirements. That case has never been settled. The Nuwaubians erected Egyptian-style statues and pyramids on the compound, often without building permits. The county sued York and some of his followers over the illegal buildings.

But in May 2002, after a lengthy investigation into allegations that York was molesting children in the compound, officials from the Putnam County Sheriff's Office and the FBI arrested York at a grocery store in Milledgeville, then raided the group's compound.

York still awaits sentencing in Putnam County Superior Court on 77 counts of child molestation, aggravated child molestation and exploitation of children he pleaded guilty to in January 2003, officials said.

Two linked to Nuwaubian sect disqualified in political bids

Associated Press/May 28, 2004

Macon -- Two people reportedly affiliated with the quasi-religious sect United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors were disqualified Wednesday as candidates for Putnam County Commission and county sheriff. George Jackson, who had qualified to run for sheriff as a Democrat, was disqualified because of a 1976 conviction for shoplifting, a three-member hearing panel ruled.

The panel was made up of Probate Judge Patrice Howard and one representative each from the Democratic and Republican parties.

Macon lawyer Jerry Lumley argued that Jackson's reported affiliation with the Nuwaubians is the reason the candidacy was challenged.

"Obviously if he's connected with the Nuwaubians, that's an unpopular cause," Lumley said. "But regardless of who he's affiliated with, he deserves the right to be a candidate for office." Lumley said he plans to appeal the ruling.

Nuwaubian leader Malachi York was convicted earlier this year of child molestation charges. That conviction was recently appealed, and his followers have been trying to win his release, saying key witnesses have now recanted their

stories. County commission hopeful Anthony Evans also was disqualified Wednesday by the panel, which said he did not meet residency requirements.

A similar challenge of incumbent Sheriff Howard Sills by a third person affiliated with the Nuwaubians was dismissed. Robbie Hibner accused Sills of attacking and injuring his ex-wife, a charge the sheriff denies. She also said in her complaint that Sills had harassed her and defamed Nuwaubians.

Property hearing for Nuwaubian leader postponed

Athens Banner-Herald/June 22, 2004
By Joe Johnson

A hearing in federal court in Macon on whether to seize property owned in Athens-Clarke and Putnam counties by convicted child molester Dwight "Malachi" York has been postponed a week because of the unavailability of a witness, court officials said.

The hearing in U.S. District Court - originally scheduled for today - was to determine whether, under federal assets forfeiture laws, the government could confiscate real estate valued at over \$1.3 million York owns in Athens and Putnam County where dozens of molestations of children as young as 8 occurred.

Pending the outcome of that hearing, which was rescheduled for June 30, a civil assets forfeiture hearing will be scheduled concerning the seizure of more than \$400,000 during a search of York's Athens and Putnam County residences.

Attorneys for the leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a quasi-religious sect who was convicted of child molestation and

racketeering, have filed an appeal in federal court, saying a key government witness in the case has recanted her testimony.

York was sentenced in April to 135 years in federal prison.

His conviction in January was largely based on the testimony of cult members who said he molested children at the group's 440-acre compound outside Eatonton in Putnam County compound and at an Athens mansion, and manipulated the sect's finances from 1998 until 2002.

In May, York's attorneys asked U.S. District Court Judge C. Ashley Royal for a new trial, citing an affidavit from one of those members recanting her testimony that York molested her and then had her solicit other children to have sex with him.

York supporters had sent videotapes to several media outlets on April 22, the day of his sentencing, showing the woman saying she had been coerced into testifying against the defendant. Their group is now called the Yamassee Native American Moors, and York, their leader, is has changed his title to Chief Black Thunderbird Eagle.

U.S. Attorney Maxwell Wood said he did not believe a retrial will be granted because of the weight of evidence against York.

"This witness was not the sole witness against the defendant," Wood said. "She was only one out of over 40 witnesses that testified for the prosecution, so it's not likely" a new trial will be ordered.

Wood, head prosecutor for the U.S. District for Middle Georgia, added that witness testimony had been corroborated by the physical evidence and by testimony from medical experts.

York still awaits sentencing in Putnam County Superior Court, after he pleaded guilty in January 2003 to 77 state counts of child

molestation, aggravated child molestation and exploitation of children.

Nuwaubians retain control of land for now

Associated Press/July 1, 2004

Macon, GA -- A federal judge has allowed members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors to keep \$1.7 million in land until the court decides whether the group's leader, convicted child molester Malachi York, will get a new trial.

At a hearing yesterday, U-S District Judge C- Ashley Royal said there was no evidence that anyone other than York owned the land, but he agreed to delay the final ruling on whether federal officials could seize the property.

York was sentenced in April to 135 years in federal prison after his January conviction on child molestation and racketeering charges. Defense attorneys have filed a motion for a new trial and a notice of intent to appeal the conviction.

Prosecutors filed a civil lawsuit against York last year to seize his property. But Nuwaubian members claimed the land -- including the quasi-religious sect's 476-acre compound in Putnam County and York's house in Athens -- belongs to them and not York.

Nuwaubians sue sheriff, saying he was slow to act on child molestation

The Telegraph/July 1, 2004

By Gary Tanner

Seven people have filed federal lawsuits against Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills, alleging he did not act quickly enough to reports that their children were molested by Malachi York, leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors religious sect.

York was convicted in April of molestation charges and received a 135-year prison sentence.

Sills was served with the lawsuits on Wednesday and has not yet responded to them.

Nuwaubians targeting sheriff with lawsuits

The Macon Telegraph/July 12, 2004
By Gary Tanner

Eatonton -- Within the past month, at least a dozen lawsuits have been filed in at least two courts against Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills by people affiliated with the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors religious sect.

Sills calls it harassment.

For example, he said Nuwaubian litigants have in the past requested to take his deposition in a Chinese restaurant.

"They have asked me questions like, 'Do you like popcorn?' and 'Have you ever played baseball?' " Sills said.

An expert on "sovereign citizen" movements says that kind of strategy is common among members of some extremist groups and could be motivated by a number of reasons.

"Harassing litigation is a common tactic used by people with sovereign citizen beliefs," Mark Pitcavage of the Anti-Defamation League said. "I would classify the Nuwaubians as a Moorish group, which has a lot of ties to the sovereign citizen movement."

People who believe in sovereign citizenship reject government control over them and most laws.

The one plaintiff successfully contacted by The Telegraph declined to comment. Telephone numbers could not be located for most others.

The recent civil complaints against Sills allege he was informed of possible child molestation at the Nuwaubian property in rural Putnam County

in 1998 and did not act promptly. Some complaints have been filed in U.S. District Court in Macon and others have been filed in Fulton County courts.

After a four-year investigation, the group's leader, Malachi York, was charged with child molestation and racketeering. He was convicted in U.S. District Court and sentenced in April to 135 years in prison.

Some of the complaints against Sills allege molestation took place, but was committed by former group members who testified against York at his trial.

Members of the group have been touting that several prosecution witnesses have recanted their stories, which they say proves York is not guilty. Prosecutors have said group members have been pressuring witnesses to change their stories.

Pitcavage said retaliation against the group's perceived enemies in the government, or a desire to clog the court system or a deterrence of further actions against the group could be factors driving the recent flurry of complaints.

Putnam County lawyer Frank Ford, who has represented the county in Nuwaubian lawsuits, called the most recent actions "frivolous."

All of the complaints were filed without lawyers representing the plaintiffs. Pitcavage said people who believe in sovereign citizenship believe lawyers "are illegitimate, or not even citizens."

Sills said the latest actions are not the first time affiliates of the group have targeted him.

"One of them filed a bogus lien on my property," he said. "I had to pay to have that straightened out."

The same group member, Tommy Lee Cox El, in 2002 filed a "court of common law," action against Sills.

Attempts to reach Cox El were unsuccessful.

Pitcavage said both tactics are used commonly by extremist groups, but fell off when "in the 1990s a lot of people got arrested for it."

Sills said he hopes judges will put an end to the complaints.

Pitcavage said in most cases, if a judge decides a complaint is "malicious," the judge can prevent the individual from filing further actions.

York conviction puts cult, compound in limbo

The Macon Telegraph/July 14, 2004
By Gary Tanner

Eatonton -- People in Putnam County are waiting to see what will happen to the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors religious sect now that its leader, Malachi York, is in federal prison and the government wants to seize its headquarters.

At Wooten's Barber Shop in Eatonton, owner Sammy Wooten said many of his customers are hopeful the sect will fade into memory if the federal government owns the property and York is behind bars.

"At first it was funny when they showed up," Wooten said. "It got to be ridiculous."

At least one member of the group said it will carry on. Kermit B. Nowlin, 33, said Tuesday he has been a York follower for more than 10 years and previously lived at its headquarters in rural Putnam County.

"Nuwaubians are not going to be wiped out by this," Nowlin said.

Mark Pitcavage of the Anti-Defamation League said quasi-religious cult groups like the Nuwaubians react differently to the loss of a leader.

"Some of them continue on under new leadership, some kind of die out and sometimes a leader may try to continue to lead from prison," Pitcavage said. "In this case it's too soon to tell."

York was sentenced in April for his conviction on child molestation and racketeering charges. His lawyers have filed a motion for a new trial and a notice of intent to appeal his conviction.

Nowlin said he does not believe the Nuwaubians' leader will remain in prison.

"I believe 100 percent that Dr. York is not guilty of the child molestation charges or the racketeering charge against him," Nowlin said. "And I believe that one day he will be cleared of those charges."

York started the group in the late 1960s in Brooklyn, N.Y., calling it the Nubian Islamic Hebrews, according to an FBI report on the group.

Over the years, the group moved outside the city to a suburban property and became known at the Ansaru Allah Community. The group's teachings have incorporated parts of Islam, Judaism and Christianity over the years, as well as the polytheistic Egyptian themes.

York at one time claimed to be from another world.

He moved his headquarters to Putnam County in 1993 where it has been known as the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors and more recently as the Yamassee Native Americans of the Creek Nation.

The Nuwaubian empire York built included the \$950,000, 476-acre tract in rural Putnam County that group members have argued is their sovereign holy land, a \$750,000 house in Athens

Nuwaubians in the News

and more than a dozen book stores in at least five states.

Last year, federal prosecutors filed a civil lawsuit against York to seize the two pieces of property and more than \$430,000 in cash seized in May 2002, at the time of York's arrest.

Group members are fighting forfeiture of the property, claiming York deeded it to them. The book stores are not part of the forfeiture action, according to Pamela Lightsey of the U.S. Attorney's office in Macon. She declined to answer questions about who owns the bookstores and why they were not part of the forfeiture. Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills, who investigated the allegations against York, said some of the bookstores have closed since York's arrest.

"They sold York's books, tapes and videos, but they were also recruiting stations," he said. A man who answered the telephone at Macon's Nuwaubian bookstore, All Eyes on Egypt, declined comment for this story. A woman at the All Eyes on Egypt location in Augusta said she would return a call later, but did not. The telephone at a store in Columbus had been disconnected.

Ruling delayed

U.S. District Judge Ashley Royal ruled last month he will not decide whether the government can take ownership of the group's land until the issue of whether York will get a new trial is decided.

Group member Anthony Evans testified at a hearing last month that he, his wife, Patrice, and another group member, Ethel Richardson, own the land, after York deeded it to them.

At the same hearing, Richelle York Davis testified that the Athens house is owned by a family partnership and is not the property of Malachi York. Prosecutor Verda Colvin said York had 99 percent ownership of the partnership.

York followers testified in a hearing last month that they plan to continue living on the Putnam County land they call Wahanee, where the group's church, fellowship hall and office is located and where they have built a number of Egyptian-style monuments.

Property manager Al Woodall testified that the group, which now calls itself Yamassee Native Americans of the Creek Nation, has plans to improve the property if it retains ownership. He did not go into details about work that is planned.

On Tuesday, guards at the gate turned away a reporter seeking comment.

The two men, dressed in red shirts and black pants asked the reporter to back out of the driveway. When asked if officials or others could be interviewed, one of the men said, "This is not the place."

The guardhouse where the men were stationed is located inside a large faux stone pillar on the left side of the main driveway into the property. That pillar and its twin on the right side, along with a cross piece on top are engraved with Egyptian-style symbols.

No other people were visible on the rambling property. Its main street is paved in white crushed stone and flanked by alternating flagpoles and monuments that lead to buildings to the rear of the development.

Attempts to reach officers of the group last week and on Tuesday were unsuccessful.

Sills said the group's presence in Putnam County seems to have diminished in recent years. But late last month, about 1,000 people attended the group's Zed Festival centered on York's birthday. In past years, the birthday has been marked by an event known as Founder's Day or Savior's Day.

Officials have said at one time hundreds of Nuwaubians lived and worked in Putnam County, with perhaps several thousand visitors

for Savior's Day. About 50 people still live at the Nuwaubian property, Sills said. Putnam County Commission Chairman Steve Layson said the number of Nuwaubians seemed to decline even before York's arrest.

"The people who distributed literature on the street corners and the people who became familiar through their dealings with the county over zoning issues, you don't see anymore," Layson said. "Where they are now, I don't know."

Nowlin said the Nuwaubians who remain at the compound are not representative of the majority of the group.

"The people that protest in front of the courthouse and are filing all these lawsuits are not Dr. York's supporters," Nowlin said. "They are actually trying to do him harm. It appears their purpose is to make us all look ridiculous. They walked with him for years, but they didn't hear his message."

Judge OKs seizure of Nuwaubian property

The Macon Telegraph/July 14, 2004
By Gary Tanner and Sharon E. Crawford

U.S. District Judge Ashley Royal issued an order Thursday allowing federal officials to seize \$1.7 million in property tied to the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, including the group's 476-acre headquarters in rural Putnam County.

Royal on Monday ruled the property is owned by the founder of the religious sect, Malachi York, who was convicted in January of child molestation and racketeering charges. His ruling Thursday stated the government can proceed in taking ownership of the property.

Lawyer Robert Ratliff, who represents several members of the group who claim ownership of the property, said Thursday he will immediately file an appeal of Royal's decision. Ratliff said he will ask the appeals court to issue an injunction to delay government seizure of the property, which includes the Putnam County compound and a \$750,000 house in Athens.

U.S. Attorney Maxwell Wood said he doesn't know when the government might take possession of the land.

"It's too early to put a timetable on that," he said.

Last year, federal prosecutors filed a civil lawsuit against York to seize the two pieces of property and more than \$430,000 in cash seized at the time of York's arrest.

Two groups of people claiming to be York supporters came forward saying they were the actual owners of the property.

Royal held a hearing June 30 to hear claims that York had deeded the Putnam County property to three of his followers and that ownership of the Athens house had been transferred to a family partnership.

"We've said all along that Dwight (Malachi) York has always been in control of these properties," Wood said Wednesday. "This was just a ploy to create confusion ... which has become their usual tactic."

Royal's decision Thursday comes just two weeks after saying he would delay making a decision until he determined whether York would get a new trial. York founded the Nuwaubian group in the late 1960s in New York and moved its headquarters to Putnam County in 1993.

Royal's ruling Thursday did not explain why he decided to allow the government forfeiture to proceed, and the judge's staff said he does not publicly discuss his rulings.

"I don't understand it, because the U.S. attorney did agree to (the delay)," Ratliff said of Royal's decision.

Wood said he would probably meet next week with representatives from the U.S. Marshal's Office and other agencies to determine when they will take possession of the property in Putnam County and the home in Athens.

"I understand their lawyer will move to reconsider, and we'll take that into account," Wood said. "There is no need to rush in there. We will act methodically."

Both sides said that if the appeals fail and the government does take possession of the property, they expect a peaceful hand-over.

"The group will exercise every legal option - and there are several - to prove their title to the land," Ratliff said. "But if it came down to brass tacks, they would turn it over peacefully."

Wood said he expects no physical resistance from the Nuwaubians.

"I don't anticipate any problems," Wood said. "We've never had that type of trouble with them before."

The group's Putnam County headquarters contains a church, fellowship hall, offices and is home to about 50 people. The grounds are decorated with Egyptian-style monuments, including two pyramids and a replica of the Sphinx.

The group's teachings have incorporated parts of Islam, Judaism and Christianity over the years, as well as the polytheistic Egyptian themes. York at one time claimed to be from another world.

Nuwaubians appear to have vacated compound

Associated Press/August 9, 2004

Eatonton, Ga. -- Members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors have apparently vacated land owned by the group in rural Putnam County and in Athens.

This comes after a federal judge ordered the land, which includes a 476-acre Putnam County compound and a \$750,000 home in Athens, be turned over to the government.

At its peak, as many as 500 people lived at the compound in 1999, said Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills. But recently, fewer than 50 had been living there.

And by Friday, no members of the Nuwaubian group could be seen at its headquarters near Shady Dale. Left behind were a collection of monuments, faux pyramids, totem poles and some cats and fish.

Officers from the Putnam County Animal Control office were at the property rescuing the cats. Workers also were draining a decorative pond and collecting the fish. A barricade prevents vehicles from entering.

The religious sect's leader, Malachi York, was sentenced to 135 years in prison in April for child molestation and racketeering. Prosecutors said he recruited older girls to groom younger girls for sex with him and used the sect for his financial gain.

"The whole place, like York himself, was nothing but a facade," Sills said. "You can see that now. They sort of destroyed some things. It's a surreal environment with junk, clothes scattered around and statues about to fall down."

After York's sentencing, a dispute arose over whether he owned the compound and the home in Athens. But both are now in the hands of the U.S. Marshals Service.

The Putnam County property has been assessed at nearly \$1 million, Sills said.

U.S. District Judge Ashley Royal will decide this Friday whether to order a new trial for York, Sills said. An attorney from New York, Jonathan Marks, now is listed as York's attorney. Sills said York has had 13 different attorneys since his arrest nearly two years ago.

Seized Nuwaubian properties await sale

Associated Press/August 10, 2004

Eatonton, Ga. -- It is not clear when the property the federal government seized from religious sect leader Malachi York will be sold, U.S. Marshal Theresa Rodgers said.

"I cannot say at this time," Rodgers said Monday.

The seized property includes a 476-acre compound used by the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors in rural Putnam County and a house in Athens. Last week, marshals, who were acting on a court order, seized the properties, which had been vacated by the group's members.

The properties have been valued at \$1.7 million. They are expected to be sold with the money going back to the agencies that investigated and prosecuted York.

York was sentenced to 135 years in prison in April for child molestation and racketeering. Prosecutors said he recruited older girls to groom younger girls for sex with him and used the sect for his financial gain.

A hearing is set for Friday morning in U.S. District Court in Macon to hear a motion seeking a new trial for York.

Witness in York case maintains original testimony was true

Associated Press/August 14, 2004

Macon, Ga. -- A key government witness in the case of a leader of a quasi-religious sect convicted of child molestation and racketeering said she tried to recant her testimony because she felt sorry for him.

Attorneys for Malachi York, head of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, had sought a new trial because one of the witnesses had made sworn statements in contradiction to trial testimony that said she had not been molested by York.

But witness Habiybah Washington said on the witness stand on Friday that her trial testimony against York was true. During the trial, she said York molested her beginning when she was 13 and that York molested other children as well.

She said she later recanted her testimony because she felt sorry for York and that "everyone deserves a second chance, even when they do something wrong."

York's defense attorney Jonathan Marks told Judge Ashley Royal that because Washington stuck to her original testimony, he wanted to withdraw his motion for a new trial. But York instructed Marks to leave the motion in place.

Royal did not rule on the motion on Friday.

York was sentenced to 135 years in federal prison in April. His January conviction was

based on the testimony of cult members who said he regularly molested children and manipulated the sect's finances from 1998 to 2002, when federal agents raided their compound.

Judge denies Nuwaubian leader's request for new trial

**The Associated Press/August 17,
2004**

Macon, Ga. -- A federal judge has denied a request for a new trial by the leader of a quasi-religious sect convicted of child molestation and racketeering.

Malachi York, head of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, has been serving a 135-year sentence since his January conviction on charges he regularly molested children and manipulated the sect's finances from 1998 to 2000, when federal agents raided their Putnam County compound.

U.S. District Court Judge Ashley Royal held a hearing Friday on York's request, after a key government witness said she lied during the trial and that she was not molested by York.

But during the hearing, 28-year-old Habiybah Washington ultimately stood by her testimony, saying she only tried to recant because she felt sorry for York.

The judge issued his decision Monday.

York, 58, still awaits sentencing in Putnam County Superior Court, after he pleaded guilty in January 2003 to 77 counts of child molestation, aggravated child molestation and exploitation of children.

Religious sect dwindles; leader in prison

**Citizen Online Edition/October 16,
2004**

By Mark Niese

Eatonton -- Pyramids, obelisks and a lonely sphinx stand deserted on the Egyptian-themed compound where as many as 500 members of a quasi-religious sect lived only five years ago.

The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors has gone quiet since its leader, Malachi York, was sentenced to 135 years in federal prison in April for molesting 14 boys and girls whose parents were members of his group. The federal government has seized the Nuwaubians' 476-acre farm in this middle Georgia town and the group's members have dispersed.

"York was it. Everything flowed from York. There was never any mistake about that," said Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills, who has clashed with the Nuwaubians since York moved his followers from New York City's Brooklyn borough to this rural county in 1993. "He was the absolute ruler. There was no one else," Sill said of York.

At their height, the Nuwaubians brought 5,000 people to Eatonton for Savior's Day to celebrate York's birthday. In 1999, as many as 500 people lived on the compound, practicing York's malleable religion that shifted from Islamic roots to Judaism, Christianity and Egyptian mysticism, with members at times dressing as cowboys and American Indians. At one time, York even incorporated space aliens into his teachings, claiming that he was an extraterrestrial from the planet "Rizq."

When the U.S. Marshal's office seized York's property over the summer, about 50 people were evicted from the compound. "As far as I'm

concerned, it's over. He's gone, and he was the ringleader," County Commissioner Sandra Adams said. Some Nuwaubians carry on. Their flashy Web site is still active, and they still operate a small bookstore in Atlanta that sells various literature, including York's writings.

"Everybody is still working together and moving forward," said Adrian Patrick, York's attorney. "People are trying to fit the organization into this traditional hierarchy, but that's simply not the case. You can't destroy the organization by having the head incarcerated."

Some of the Nuwaubians still live in Eatonton near the compound, but two of them wouldn't comment when approached by a reporter. Two others who live in the Atlanta area did not return telephone messages left at their homes, and a woman working at the bookstore directed all inquiries to the group's Web site.

The site includes hundreds of posted messages from York's followers who are trying to raise money for his court appeals. They have titles like, "He NEVER Molested Us - He is innocent!!!" and "Attorney Sabotages York's Case."

A neighbor who lives near the compound said he thinks York was targeted by white authorities with an agenda against the mostly black Nuwaubians, who now call themselves The Yamassee Native Americans of the Creek Nation.

"In the old days, they would have hanged him," neighbor Bobby Walker said. "But today, they hung a charge on him he couldn't fight. ... This man bucked the power structure of Putnam County, and he should've known better."

The Nuwaubian compound has sat empty for months. An American flag hangs on the entrance gate, and some of the 20-some structures are starting to fall apart. The federal government is expected to eventually put the land up for sale.

York, 58, was convicted by a jury in January of 10 counts of child molestation and racketeering.

Prosecutors said he used the cult for his sexual pleasure and financial gain, including recruiting members to groom children for sex with him.

Nuwaubians rally as leader's case is appealed

Associated Press/November 18, 2004
By Doug Gross

Atlanta -- Attorneys for jailed religious sect leader Dwight "Malachi" York called his federal conviction on child sex charges flawed Thursday, as more than 100 members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors pronounced their group strong, even with their leader in prison.

York's attorneys filed an appeal with the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The brief says the prosecution improperly applied federal racketeering laws, the judge erred when ruling on defense motions and the grand jury was tainted by pretrial publicity, York's attorney, Adrian Patrick of Athens, said Thursday.

The brief also says that York's own trial lawyers jeopardized York's appeal by withdrawing a crucial motion.

York was sentenced to 135 years in federal prison in April for molesting 14 boys and girls whose parents were members of his group.

"We are still affirming that Dr. York is innocent of these charges," Patrick said at a news conference outside the state Capitol building.

Patrick was fired as York's attorney after his conviction, but was rehired for the appeal.

Nuwaubians in the News

York recently referred to himself as "Baba" in a letter to supporters from a special housing unit of the federal prison in Leavenworth, Kan. In the Oct. 30 message, York said he has received visitors from another planet while in prison and was moved by prison officials because he was converting other inmates and levitating in the air.

In the letter, York said visitors named Crlll, Alomar and Saad visited him from "Zeta Reticuli" and healed him.

A spokeswoman for U.S. Attorney Maxwell Wood, who headed the prosecution during the three-week trial in Brunswick, said Wood would have no comment on the appeal, noting that the government has until Dec. 13 to file its response.

"For sale" signs now stand on the 476-acre, Putnam County compound where as many as 500 Nuwaubians lived in pyramid-style structures only five years ago. The property was seized by the federal government.

But Thursday, members said their group is still going strong.

"They said the Nuwaubian nation is dead and they hoped we would dwindle away," said Hattie McKenny, of Athens, who led the group in a religious recital before the conference began. "From what I see, we are setting that straight today."

In the past, members have appeared publicly dressed as cowboys and in other unusual garb as they practiced York's malleable religion - which incorporates Islam, Judaism, Christianity and Egyptian mysticism and has even included talk of space aliens.

On Thursday, members were dressed more conventionally.

All wore black, a few men wore Shriner-style fezzes and several women adorned their foreheads with jewelry similar to the bindi worn by Hindu women.

McKenney called the group "very solid, very strong," before referring other questions to Patrick.

Officials in rural Putnam County say they've seen few signs of the group since York's conviction.

Sheriff Howard Sills said he's had no contact with about 20 Nuwaubians who own homes in the county. He said the crowd at Thursday's press conference suggests the group is growing smaller.

"During the hearings and during the trial itself, the most they could gather was around 200," he said. "This sounds like about half of even what they could gather then."

Patrick said York had been ill in prison, but is feeling better.

"He's doing fine; he's upbeat and feeling very well," Patrick said. "It's the love that he feels from this family."

Former Nuwaubian writes book, tells how York duped followers

The Macon Telegraph/March 14, 2005

By Sharon E. Crawford

Robert Rohan says he begged on the streets for money and then gave it all away to a man who needed nothing.

And now he's written a book about it.

The 38-year-old New York native spent 16 years following the teachings of Malachi York, founder of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors who is currently serving a 135-year federal prison sentence for child molestation and racketeering.

Rohan said he left the group just before local, state and federal agents stormed the 476-acre property in rural Putnam County. He believes York committed the crimes he is accused of, although Rohan says he never saw any of that while he was in the group.

"I have no doubt in my mind that he did it," Rohan said. "A person who would lie would steal and a person who would steal would lie."

Now, Rohan has written a book - "Holding York Responsible" - which describes his experiences as a Nuwaubian and how he says York conned followers.

"Malachi York has a lot of charisma," Rohan said in a recent phone interview from New York. "There are people in life you meet who can draw you in with their conversation. That was Malachi York."

Rohan was introduced to York's teachings as a teenager in the early 1980s. York, then known as Imam Isa, lived with a handful of his followers in New York in an outwardly Muslim sect.

"My first thought was 'Wow, a black Jesus,' when I saw the picture of Malachi York inside all the books that he wrote," Rohan wrote in his own book. "So, it is only fair to say ... it gave me a sense of black pride and self-respect as I began my journey in search of knowledge."

Rohan soon moved into the community and attended classes on York's teachings. He said he became suspicious early on, but stayed because he liked the atmosphere of the black community.

"He had enough money to do something positive for the community, but he only thought of himself," Rohan said.

Rohan said he and others were forced to go out and raise \$100 a day by selling York's books or other products.

"Malachi York became very wealthy," Rohan said. "If someone didn't bring the money in, they would have to leave the group ... that was his rule."

Rohan said York eventually moved the group to Eatonton when the government and longtime members started questioning his teachings. When the Nuwaubians moved to Putnam County in 1993, York was claiming to be from another planet.

"Malachi York came up with the idea to move down South ... because he was under FBI investigation," Rohan said. "He provided us as his followers the bogus rationale that we were moving down South to meet our spiritual parents. (He) always was quick to forget that he gave more than one reason for many changes that he introduced throughout the organization."

After moving to Georgia, York and his followers claimed affiliation with Masons and with the Jewish, Christian and Egyptian faiths.

"Once he started changing religious ideas, the older followers became skeptical and left the group," Rohan said. "That was what happened to me."

Rohan, who said he never actually lived on the Eatonton compound, said he became totally disenchanted with York when he learned the leader was having intimate relationships with female members - many of them were married to the male members.

"He would tell us that we couldn't have sex with our wives because we had to stay pure," Rohan said.

Rohan said he finally got fed up with York and moved back to New York to get away from the group. He left behind an ex-wife - who is still a Nuwaubian - and their three children. He worries that his children will believe York's teachings.

"We're all adults," Rohan said. "I feel sorry for the children because they don't know any better."

Woman sentenced in case against founder York

Macon Telegraph/March 16, 2005
By Tim Shurrock

The last person sentenced in the case against United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors founder Malachi York received 12 months probation for having sex with York in front of a child, said Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit Assistant District Attorney Dawn Baskin.

Istiyar Cole pleaded guilty Tuesday to reckless conduct.

Baskin said that when Cole had sex with York in front of a child, the intent was to get the child used to the idea of sex so that York could have sex with the child.

The Nuwaubians are a quasi-religious group founded by York in New York in the late 1960s. It moved in 1993 to rural Putnam County.

After a three-year investigation, York was charged in 2001 with molesting more than a dozen children who were part of the group.

York was sentenced in April to a 135-year prison sentence on child molestation and racketeering charges.

Defendants claim sovereignty

Two men convicted, but they don't recognize state court power.

**The Macomb Daily/May 7, 2005
By Chad Halcom**

Two members of a political/religious order that doesn't recognize the legal authority of the state court system could face jail or prison time after they were both convicted by a jury.

Jurors took roughly 90 minutes in deliberations this week before convicting Alvester Jones, 62, and Reginald Jones, 40, in a trial before Macomb County Circuit Judge James M. Biernat. But the case against them encountered some obstacles from start to finish, officials said, since both men are part of an organization that believes it is not subject to the local authorities and their laws.

"They didn't recognize the authority of the Macomb Circuit Court, so sometimes we had some communication difficulty with them," said Jeffery Cojocar, a defense attorney for Alvester Jones in the case. "But overall, it didn't come up that much as a factor in the case except in the (jury selection)."

Prosecutors said the Joneses belong to the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a quasi-religious order based near Macon, Ga., but the defense attorneys and a police officer in the case identified them as "Sovereign Moors." In either case, officials said, both of them cite the tenets of their organization and refuse to recognize the legitimacy of courts in any state throughout the country.

"Of course they have every right to their political and religious views, and we don't in any way want to infringe on those. But their legal views -- the fact that they say they are not

subject to our laws -- are utterly without merit," said Stephen Steinhardt, the Macomb County assistant prosecutor handling the case. "They live in our country, and they are subject to all the same laws as everyone else is."

Both men were facing a felony charge for illegal possession of a Taser shocking device concealed in a compartment under the passenger seat of a car stopped by St. Clair Shores police last November. They also faced an additional 90-day misdemeanor charge of refusal to submit to fingerprinting after their arrest.

But Judge Biernat granted a defense request during the trial to dismiss the taser charge against Alvester Jones, who was in the passenger seat of the vehicle driven and owned by Reginald Jones. The judge agreed with defense arguments that no evidence in the trial ever indicated that Alvester Jones was aware of the Taser stored in a compartment under the passenger seat.

"If this evidence were sufficient, then any person getting into a vehicle operated by another would have to search that vehicle, for anything illegal," Biernat stated in his ruling from the bench.

The Jones vehicle also had some sort of self-made driver licenses and vehicle plates to emulate diplomatic plates, which were confiscated by Shores police, court officials said. But the Joneses were not cited or ticketed for driving without a valid driver license.

"My understanding is they don't recognize the authority of any state courts, only the federal courts," said Khalid Sheikh, a defense attorney for Reginald Jones. "And some of this they base on court rulings like the Dred Scott (U.S. Supreme Court) case from the 1800s, and the interstate commerce clause and the right to travel between states."

The United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors stems from an organizational movement founded by Malachi Z. York in the late 1960s, which ultimately relocated and made its main headquarters near Macon in 1993.

Historically, the Nuwaubians and their forebears under York have dressed in attire ranging from traditional Islamic attire to cowboy-type garb and claimed York was an extraterrestrial from the planet "Rizq" in the "19th galaxy." More recently, the Nuwaubians have claimed a heritage drawing from Native Americans and ancient Egyptians.

Sheikh said his client would likely appeal the two convictions. Both men remain free on bond pending a sentencing date June 15.

Nuwaubian property to be sold, proceeds to go to authorities

Associated Press /May 26, 2005

Eatonton, Ga -- A new buyer has been found for the 476-acre Putnam County compound once owned by convicted United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors leader Malachi York. A spokeswoman with the U.S. Marshals Service, which is selling the property, said the deal will be final June 10. They would not disclose who is buying the property.

A man planning to raise and train guard dogs was going to buy the property, valued at about \$1 million, but he backed out of the deal, said Robert Kraummel, a real estate agent who is brokering the deal.

York was sentenced to 135 years in federal prison in April 2004 for molesting 14 boys and girls whose parents were members of the group. He was also convicted of racketeering. In August 2004, the federal government seized the farm that was once home nearly 500 members of the quasi-religious sect.

At their height, the Nuwaubians brought 5,000 people to Eatonton for Savior's Day to celebrate York's birthday.

Federal officials said the proceeds from the sale of the will go to the agencies involved in the investigation, primarily the Putnam County Sheriff's Office and the FBI.

York founded the religious group, which shifted from its Islamic roots to Judaism, Christianity, and Egyptian mysticism, in the late 1960s, before moving it to rural Putnam County in 1993.

Demolition begins on land seized from Nuwaubian sect

**Atlanta Journal-Constitution/June
11, 2005**
By Bill Torpy

Demolition crews in Putnam County have started tearing down the Egyptian-style structures and housing in what once was the homeland of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

The 476-acre parcel was seized last year by the U.S. government after Dwight "Malachi" York, leader of the religious sect and a godlike figure to its members, was convicted of racketeering and on six child molestation-related charges. He was sentenced to 135 years.

The parcel near Eatonton, a little more than an hour southeast of Atlanta, was sold Wednesday for \$1.1 million to a developer, said U.S. Marshal's Service spokesman Dave Turner. The new owner, Milledgeville developer Lawson Lawrence, plans to sell the property soon. He said the rolling land made up of pasture, woods and four lakes would be a perfect "retreat" for somebody.

Sheriff Howard Sills, who was York's nemesis during a lengthy investigation and legal battle, operated a front-end loader and tore down the arched gate to the compound. It came down easily. "Typical Nuwaubian style — stucco and Styrofoam," Sills said.

Sills was stationed outside the property Friday morning and speaking with relish as he watched crews tear through the series of obelisks, statues, arches and buildings. Many of the dozens of structures were weathered and in disrepair. He said very few of the Egyptian structures or objects were worth salvaging.

"It feels good to tear down the SOB myself," he said. "By the middle of next week, there will be nothing but a couple of pyramids. This place where so many despicable things happened is gone."

In 1998, Sills and other Putnam officials, who were then battling the Nuwaubians over a building code violation, received letters that York was molesting the children of his followers.

But the first victim did not come forward until 2001, Sills said. York was arrested in 2002.

In January 2004, a stream of witnesses, both female and male, testified during a three-week trial that York had molested them repeatedly over the years. One victim said the abuse started when she was 8.

Prosecutors described a culture in which York was the unquestioned ruler and was variously called Dr. York, Isa Muhammad, Baba, the Master Teacher and the Savior. He founded the organization in a crime-infested area of Brooklyn, N.Y., more than 30 years ago and moved the group to Putnam County in 1993.

The group built a series of pyramids, obelisks and statues and then got in repeated legal and zoning disputes with county officials.

At least 200 followers lived on the land at one time, with children separated from their parents. Witnesses said they lived in dilapidated housing while York lived in relative opulence.

Very few of the Nuwaubians still live in the area, Sills said, although about eight of them who live in a rental house nearby dressed in white this week and stood by the shoulder of the road in protest.

Nuwaubian manor goes up for auction

Morris News Service in Augusta Chronicle/August 18, 2005
By Joe Johnson

Athens, Ga. -- The mansion's rank odor is as foul as the unspeakable deeds done there when occupied by a religious sect leader now serving a 137-year prison sentence on federal child molestation and racketeering charges.

Yet at least a half-dozen people showed up to inspect the palatial nine-bedroom house at 155 Mansfield Court in west Athens once owned by Dwight "Malachi" York. The U.S. Marshals Service is auctioning the house, one of two properties seized after Mr. York's conviction in January 2004.

No one has lived in the mansion for three years, since Mr. York's arrest in May 2002.

Two prospective buyers who inspected the property Friday - Brad Stephens, a Duluth home builder, and David Felt, an Athens attorney - were considering a bid as partners to repair the mansion and resell it for a profit.

The size of the 8,309-square-foot house might scare away buyers more than the stigma of its previous owner, Mr. Stephens said.

"I build \$500,000 spec houses, but this place makes me a little nervous - it's just so big," he said. "How would you use up all this space?"

Mr. Felt agreed that finding a buyer might be difficult.

"You'd need to find someone famous, like an Atlanta professional athlete who wants to be on MTV Cribs," the real-estate attorney said.

The property includes 6 bathrooms and a three-car garage in the main house, along with a guest house and a swimming pool with pool house.

As mansions come, it is a definite fixer-upper, with peeling wallpaper, unhinged interior doors, unkempt landscaping and the pervasive odor of mildew.

The minimum bid in the online auction, which closed Wednesday at 3 p.m., was \$420,000. As of late Tuesday afternoon, auctioneers had only two bids, the latest a \$445,000 offer for the house Mr. York bought in 1998 for \$528,000. According to the Marshals Service, the house is assessed at \$840,000.

Mr. York, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y., started the sect the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors in New York City in the late 1960s. The group moved to Georgia in 1993, with about 500 of Mr. York's followers settling on a 476-acre compound in Eatonton.

In addition to the Mansfield Court property, Mr. York bought the former Ideal Amusements building on West Broad Street in Athens for \$385,000.

The government also seized the Eatonton compound, valued at about \$1 million, and sold it in June to an undisclosed buyer. According to authorities, Mr. York regularly had sex with more than a dozen children at both sites.

Mr. York, now 60, was convicted in January 2004 in U.S. District Court in Macon on charges of conspiracy, racketeering, transporting minors for unlawful sex and tax evasion, among other crimes. He is in a special housing unit of the federal prison in Leavenworth, Kan.

Sect leader's convictions upheld

Athens Banner-Herald (GA)/October 28, 2005

By Joe Johnson

A federal appeals court on Thursday upheld the 2004 conviction of religious sect leader Dwight "Malachi" York that led to a 135-year prison sentence on child molestation and racketeering charges.

The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision was announced without comment by G.F. Peterman III, acting U.S. attorney for the Middle District of Georgia.

York appealed his conviction on several grounds, including claims that prosecutors improperly applied federal racketeering laws, the trial judge erred when ruling on defense motions and the grand jury that indicted him had been tainted by pretrial publicity.

Because of the publicity, York's trial was moved from U.S. District Court in Macon to Brunswick, where a jury convicted him Jan. 23, 2004, on charges of conspiracy, racketeering, conspiracy to transport minors for unlawful sex, transporting minors for unlawful sex, traveling interstate to engage in unlawful sex and structuring cash transactions to avoid reporting requirements.

The convictions were based largely on the testimony of former members of York's cult, the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, who said he began molesting children as young as 8 years old in New York, where the cult was founded. He continued molesting children after moving the group in 1993 to a 476-acre compound outside Eatonton in Putnam County, witnesses testified, as well as at the sect leader's mansion on Mansfield Court in Athens.

Former Nuwaubians testified York had manipulated the sect's finances for personal gain from 1998 until his arrest in 2002.

The Athens mansion was seized by the U.S. Marshals Service and sold at auction in August.

York, who currently goes by the name of Chief Black Thunderbird Eagle, is serving his sentence in a special housing unit of the federal prison in Leavenworth, Kan.

Sect chief's influence felt at Clarke jail

Deputy's letter to convicted child molester sparks probe by chief jailer who's fired

Athens Banner-Herald/June 18, 2006
By Joe Johnson

In March, Clarke County's chief jailer Brett Hart got a letter from a federal prison.

It said a local sheriff's deputy was writing to one of the inmates, convicted child molester Dwight "Malachi" York, a spiritual leader the deputy affectionately calls "Baba" and "Pops," according to documents obtained by the Athens Banner-Herald.

Hart opened an internal investigation to find out how deputies were trying to recruit prisoners at the Clarke County Jail into the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a religious sect with black supremacist overtones headed by York.

A month later, Hart was abruptly fired.

Clarke County Sheriff Ira Edwards gives only vague explanations why he fired the highly-

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regarded jailer; Hart, pondering a lawsuit, won't speculate.

But Hart's attorney sees only one possibility: Hart continued to press an investigation that his superiors didn't seem interested in pursuing.

Documents obtained by the Banner-Herald include correspondence between Hart and federal prison officials, as well as letters sent by a Clarke County sheriff's deputy and others to York at the maximum security prison in Colorado where the sect leader is serving a 135-year sentence.

Intercepted letter

Nuwaubian literature - some approved and some banned by jail officials - had been circulating around the Lexington Road facility for some time, according to deputies who work at the jail.

But it wasn't until March 7, when the Special Investigative Supervisor's Office of the Colorado prison notified Hart that prison officials had intercepted a letter from a Clarke County sheriff's deputy to York, that the jail opened an internal affairs investigation.

While Hart contends the deputy violated jail policy by writing to a convicted felon, Edwards said the matter was discussed with an attorney who determined no policies were violated, although the policy about corresponding with prison inmates is being looked at for possible revision.

Of the five letters to York the Banner-Herald obtained from a source who did not want to be identified, two were written by the same deputy. The others were from civilians who shared addresses with deputies.

"I am one of the ones that answered the call when you suggested that brothers join law enforcement agencies," the deputy wrote sect leader York. "I have been with the Clarke County Sheriff's Office since April of 2001. Baba, the brothers are with you. We are

organizing the Supreme Grand Lodge for your return to give us proper instruction."

The deputy, who holds the rank of corporal, identifies himself to York as "one of your sons" and wrote about organizational efforts here and elsewhere.

"I went to Chicago recently and spoke with brothers interested in joining the brotherhood," the deputy told York. "We are doing our best to get a Lodge started here ... Hopefully this will spiral into the entire community and we can squash the unnecessary beef amongst us. If you have a message for any of the brothers, I will directly relay it to them."

In another letter, the deputy tells York about efforts to prove the sect leader's innocence through the media and Internet.

"This will not only inform people of your innocence, but will save souls and unite the family under our doctrine of Wu-Nuwaubu. We support Africa because that is FIRST. We will put Baba in Africa!"

The day after the federal prison official contacted Hart and he initiated an internal investigation, a superior officer told the chief jailer to get the original letter, as well as the mailing label.

"That struck me as an odd request," Hart said in an interview Wednesday. "I saw no need for the original letter and mailing label since there were no criminal charges that would require handwriting analysis."

Hart said he received the originals March 29 and turned them over to a sergeant conducting the internal affairs investigation.

Two days later, Hart e-mailed the federal prison the names and addresses of four other deputies, asking for any letters they may have sent to York.

The prison responded that there were no letters from those deputies, although they found some

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from other people who shared the same addresses as deputies.

In one of the letters, dated March 2, a woman who shares the same Athens post office box as a deputy addresses York as "Dad," and talks about members of Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam attending the Nuwaubians' annual Children's Ball at a Bogart Elks Club in order to present an award to York.

"With the greater involvement of the NOI I feel there is an effort to make our nation bow to theirs, when they should be coming to us and you," she wrote.

Another woman, with the same address of another deputy, told York how she'd shaved her head, eyelashes, eyebrows "and some other hair," and how York had "made me beautiful beyond hair."

She refers to herself as York's "daughter" and tells the sect leader, "I wanna go home to Africa with you, my father, now and always."

In the cell block

Hart said Edwards hired six Nuwaubian deputies, four of whom were among a group of former Macon police officers and firefighters who quit in 2004 after the city wouldn't investigate their claims that York was the victim of a conspiracy.

According to Hart, one of the deputies was verbally reprimanded last year for violating the jail's Code of Conduct by trying to distribute prohibited Nuwaubian literature to a maximum-security prisoner.

Jail policy forbids deputies from proselytizing any faith or beliefs to inmates or distributing religious literature that has not been approved by the jail's chaplain. Hart said some Nuwaubian literature was approved for distribution.

"We denied an inmate's grievance that he wasn't allowed a book, 'Was Adam Black or White,' which was full of racially inflammatory

statements," Hart said of a book written by York.

"The chaplain later discovered material in the inmate's cell and it was confiscated," Hart said. "It was the same literature (the deputy) tried unsuccessfully to bring to the inmate before."

Edwards said his office found no evidence of wrongdoing.

"The sheriff's office investigated allegations of distribution of Nuwaubian materials and could not identify any sheriff's office employee who made such distributions," Edwards said.

Despite the jail's ban on some Nuwaubian material, a deputy told York in an April letter that he and fellow sect members were undeterred.

"I have still managed to propagate our doctrine to many of the inmates there," the deputy wrote. "The administration at the jail really doesn't want our books in the jail, but they can't stop Pops. I have many scrolls circulating in the jail. The irony is that every day I work here, though, makes me realize more and more that YOU DON'T BELONG IN PRISON! That is why I continue to fight for your freedom."

Hart said the Nuwaubian deputies' presence at the jail was disruptive, and not just because of their recruitment efforts.

One deputy, who is black, said his Nuwaubian co-workers are openly racist.

"They think the white man's the Devil," said the deputy, who requested anonymity for fear of retaliation. "I can't get down with that."

The deputy added, "What gets me the most is how they were passing out information to inmates, convicted felons with no cause in life. When you look at it, those are the easiest people to recruit because they are the most vulnerable."

Hart also contends the sect is racist.

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"The Nuwaubians are a racial supremacist organization, and several white deputies were concerned if they found themselves defending against a black inmate, they wondered which side the Nuwaubian deputies would be on in a conflict between black and white," Hart said.

Abrupt termination

Edwards said his decision to fire Hart had nothing to do with Hart pressing forward with the investigation into Nuwaubian activities at the jail.

Though the sheriff would not agree to an interview, he replied to questions via e-mail, and in a statement sent Friday, reiterated a previous explanation of why he dismissed Hart as jail commander:

"I decided that there needed to be a change in the management of jail operations. That was my judgment as sheriff and that is my decision."

When asked to elaborate, Edwards said, "In the interest of fairness to our employees, I do not comment publicly about the circumstances of a former employee's separation from employment with the sheriff's office."

On the advice of his attorney, Hart declined to comment when asked if he was fired because of the investigation he initiated.

His lawyer, William J. Atkins, however, said, "I can think of no other explanation for Brett to have been terminated."

Atkins noted that Hart was highly qualified and received stellar job performance reviews each year since he was hired to run the jail in 2000. The attorney had previously commented that Hart's firing involved "a very sensitive and potentially explosive set of circumstances."

Atkins wouldn't say more because he said Hart may sue, alleging his firing was discriminatory or violated his constitutional rights.

Edwards said his office fully investigated Hart's concerns about a deputy corresponding with York, and again no wrongdoing was found.

"The sheriff's office investigated allegations of violations of policy involving communication with convicted felons and after consultation with counsel concluded that there were no policy violations," Edwards said. "The relevant section of the Standard Operating Procedure is under review for possible revision."

But Hart said it is a violation of jail policy for staff to communicate with convicted felons, and that the deputy should have been disciplined or fired.

He questioned the thoroughness of the internal affairs investigation and efforts by the sheriff's office to crack down on prohibited activities by deputies.

"The only thing I know is, on April 16, (the corporal) wrote to Malachi York again," Hart said. "And since March 7, the only member of the sheriff's office who has contacted (the Colorado prison) was myself."

During a meeting of the sheriff's command staff the last week of March, Sgt. Mike Young, an internal affairs officer, gave a progress report on the investigation.

"The first thing Sgt. Young did was give a rundown of the investigation's progress, and he listed (the corporal) as one of the deputies distributing Nuwaubian materials," Hart said in an interview Wednesday.

On April 3, Hart provided Young with additional information for the investigation, along with the name and telephone number of an FBI agent that the Colorado prison had also contacted concerning the deputy's intercepted letter.

Four days later, on April 7, Edwards summoned Hart to his office at the Clarke County Courthouse and told him he was fired.

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"The sheriff gave no other reason for terminating me other than saying a change in jail management was necessary," Hart said. Placed on administrative leave, Hart's employment was officially terminated May 7.

Hart said Edwards ordered him to surrender his badge, gun and other county equipment, and had a captain drive Hart straight to the jail to clean out his office and then to his home.

"This treatment is normally reserved for staff who committed serious criminal misconduct, and it's known as the 'ride of shame,'" Hart said.

The sheriff denied Hart was harshly treated.

"The transportation furnished was not intended to belittle Mr. Hart," Edwards said. "At that time, he was placed on administrative leave with pay and the assistance was provided as a courtesy. Mr. Hart could have chosen a different means to go to the Jail and to his home."

Movement continues

York, 60, claims to be from another galaxy and had promised followers a spaceship was going to arrive in 2003 to spirit away 144,000 true believers.

The identity and beliefs of the Nuwaubians have morphed since York led groups in New York City known as Ansaar Pure Sufi and the Nubian Islamic Hebrews. He also adopted the name Chief Black Eagle.

York and hundreds of his followers moved to Georgia in 1993.

In Athens, Nuwaubians made contributions to the community, such as when they donated 3,000 cans of food to local food banks. York also contributed \$2,000 to Edwards' campaign for sheriff in 2000.

Edwards said the contribution did not buy the Nuwaubians any influence.

"I have no allegiance or sympathy with the Nuwaubian group or any of its members," Edwards said.

Under the guise of spiritual leader and deity, prosecutors said, York sexually abused children as young as 8 years old at the Nuwaubians' 476-acre compound in Eatonton, where up to 500 sect members lived. Children also were abused at York's mansion on Mansfield Court in Athens, prosecutors said.

York was arrested in May 2002, and a U.S. District Court jury convicted York in January 2004 on charges of racketeering, conspiracy to transport minors for unlawful sex, two counts of transporting minors for unlawful sex, traveling across state lines to engage in unlawful sex, and three charges of structuring cash transactions to avoid reporting requirements.

Despite York's conviction, many Nuwaubians remain loyal to their spiritual leader, and there are countless postings on the Internet from followers across the nation proclaiming York's innocence and a government conspiracy.

One Clarke County deputy told York in a letter about efforts to have him freed from prison, and preparations were being made for his release.

"We have created a website, www.heisinnocent.com," the deputy wrote. "This site is dedicated to letting the world know the facts that show you are completely innocent and a serious conspiracy was plotted against a just man of God."

A billboard promoting the Web site is at the site of the Nuwaubians' former Holy Tabernacle Ministries bookstore on West Broad Street.

Meetings and classes continue to be held at the Nuwaubians' lodge on West Hancock Avenue, according to The United Nuwaubian Nation Web site.

One member's call to continue the fight to free York, made at the last "Family Meeting" at the lodge, on June 10, was posted on the Web site:

"This is the time we need to be aware of the importance of being more unified. Considering what's going on in the world and the day and time we are living; Wars, Tornados, children killing children, families against families. It's a sign of the time and we need our master teacher."

Nuwaubian resence

United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors spiritual leader Dwight "Malachi" York, above in full regalia and below as he is led from a federal courthouse in Macon after his 2004 sentencing for molestation and other crimes. Letters to York indicate Nuwaubian recruitment efforts at the Clarke County Jail.

A vague termination

Former chief jailer Brett Hart, left, started an investigation into reported attempts by the Nuwaubians to recruit inmates at the Clarke County Jail. A month later, Sheriff Ira Edwards fired Hart, explaining that "there needed to be a change in management of jail operations." Hart's lawyer said there can be only one explanation for the termination of Hart, who was highly regarded: The Nuwaubian investigation.

Grand jury calls sheriff, ex-jailer

Both give testimony this month

**Athens Banner-Herald,
Georgia/June 22, 2006
By Joe Johnson**

A Clarke County grand jury heard testimony this month from Sheriff Ira Edwards and former county jail commander Brett Hart - only weeks after Edwards abruptly fired the chief jailer who had started an investigation into a deputy's

correspondence with a convicted sex offender and religious cult leader.

Hart's attorney has claimed Edwards fired the chief jailer because Hart was probing allegations that jail employees were recruiting prisoners into their religious sect, and that at least one deputy was corresponding with the sect's leader, Dwight "Malachi" York, a convicted child molester serving a 135-year sentence in a federal prison.

Hart, who was placed on administrative leave April 7 until his termination became official a month later, appeared before the grand jury June 7, according to his attorney, William J. Atkins.

Neither Atkins nor Hart would say what the jailer told grand jurors.

Edwards appeared before the grand jury the week after Hart, leading courthouse insiders to speculate the grand jury is investigating the reason Hart was fired.

"I would assume the reason for their appearances had something to do with why Mr. Hart was relieved of his duties and what appeared in the newspaper this weekend," said one Athens attorney, who requested anonymity.

On Sunday, the Athens Banner-Herald reported that officials at a maximum-security prison in Colorado intercepted a letter from a Clarke County sheriff's deputy to York, spiritual leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, and that Hart had asked federal prison officials for more information about whether deputies were communicating with York.

Edwards on Friday said his office had looked into allegations about the deputy but found no evidence the deputy was distributing Nuwaubian literature to prisoners or that he had violated jail policy by writing to York.

He also said his office was reviewing its policy.

Even so, Hart said he continued to press the investigation. He said he supplied additional information to an internal affairs officer on April

3, and Edwards fired him four days later, explaining only that "a change in jail operations was necessary."

The former jail commander said he was pushing the investigation because, among other things, the Nuwaubian sect is a "racial supremacist organization" and some deputies were concerned about which side the Nuwaubian deputies would choose if a fight broke out between black and white prisoners.

While the grand jury decides whether there's enough evidence to indict people accused of crimes, prosecutors also ask grand jurors to consider some civil matters, such as how a government agency is operated. When grand juries subpoena a witness to testify in those investigations, they typically ask for help through the district attorney's office.

Now, however, "they are doing some investigation beyond what's been presented to them by the D.A.," said defense attorney Edward Brumby, a former prosecutor.

"Typically, the D.A. goes in there as legal adviser to the grand jury, explains how the process works and tells them what they'll be looking into civilly," Brumby said. "But if a grand jury wants to look into something on its own, outside the wishes or supervision of the D.A., that's their right."

The current grand jury is due to make its presentments July 5.

Three suspended amid jail probe

Athens Banner-Herald/July 3, 2006
By Joe Johnson

At least two sheriff's deputies belonging to a controversial religious cult and a third jail employee have been suspended from their jobs as a grand jury continues to investigate United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors activities at the Clarke County Jail, several deputies said.

One of the suspended deputies, Cpl. Anthony Montgomery, appeared before the grand jury on Thursday, a week after County Attorney Bill Berryman unsuccessfully sought to quash subpoenas issued to Montgomery and fellow deputy William York. Although York also testified Thursday, several co-workers said York wasn't suspended.

Interim Clarke County Chief Deputy Sheriff Jack Mitchell refused to answer e-mailed questions about the suspensions, including who was suspended and when, and how long the suspensions would last.

Mitchell offered the same answer to all six e-mailed questions concerning suspended deputies: "This is an ongoing matter, and we cannot respond to these questions at this time."

In addition to deputies Montgomery and Leon Adams, also a Nuwaubian, a third employee, Rena Jennings, a civilian who works in the jail's prisoner classification unit, also was suspended, several co-workers said.

Nuwaubians follow cult leader Dwight "Malachi" York, 60, who was convicted in U.S. District Court in Macon two years ago on child molestation, racketeering, tax evasion and other charges and is serving a 135-year sentence at a federal maximum security prison in Colorado. York claims, among other things, to be from

another galaxy, and he preaches a form of black supremacy.

Deputies at the county jail have said they are concerned about which side Nuwaubian deputies would take if a fight broke out along racial lines at the jail.

Court workers on Monday said they saw both Montgomery and York enter the grand jury room Thursday, and that Sheriff Ira Edwards followed later, the second time the sheriff has appeared before the investigative panel in less than a month.

It's not clear whether a third suspended jail employee, Adams, testified before the grand jury. He does have Nuwaubian ties, however, and was part of a group of Macon police officers and firefighters that quit in 2004 after the city refused to open its own investigation into whether York was the victim of a conspiracy.

Edwards had hired six Nuwaubian deputies, four of whom were former Macon police officers, according to former Chief Jailer Brett Hart, who was fired this spring.

Grand juries not only indict criminals but often consider civil matters, such as conditions at the county jail. The current grand jury apparently is looking into events that led Edwards to fire Hart in April, around the same time Hart was investigating whether Nuwaubian deputies were recruiting prisoners into their sect and if a deputy violated jail policy by corresponding with the imprisoned sect leader.

Edwards said he looked into allegations of wrongdoing by Montgomery and York but found no evidence of policy violations.

Mitchell said one of the deputies was suspended before after Loganville police cited him in August 2004 for leaving the scene of an wreck that caused damage on private property.

"Corporal Montgomery was suspended for 10 days without pay following an investigation of this incident." Mitchell said.

In the wake of that crash, which police said happened when Montgomery fell asleep at the wheel of his car and struck a Chick-fil-A sign, the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council placed the deputy on probation for two years.

Montgomery was not intoxicated, although a test at the scene showed his breath was "slightly positive" for alcohol consumption, according to an officer standards council report of the crash.

There were four passengers in Montgomery's car at the time, according to the report, which also said Montgomery was the designated driver from Atlanta to Monroe.

Grand jury investigates Nuwaubian influence at jail

Associated Press/July 4, 2006

Although the leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors religious sect is serving a 135-year sentence in a Colorado prison, a Clarke County grand jury is investigating the sect's influence on its jail and sheriff's department.

The grand jury has been examining the events that led to the firing of chief jailer Brett Hart by Sheriff Ira Edwards in the spring, several deputies told the Athens Banner-Herald.

Around the same time, Hart had been investigating whether Nuwaubian deputies were recruiting others - including prisoners - into the sect and if a deputy violated jail policy by corresponding with Dwight "Malachi" York, the leader of the predominantly black sect.

Hart said Edwards hired six Nuwaubian deputies, four of whom were former Macon police officers. Deputies at the county jail told the newspaper they've had concerns about which side Nuwaubian deputies would take if a fight broke out along racial lines at the jail.

Edwards said he's looked into allegations of wrongdoing concerning two deputies but found no policy violations.

York was sentenced to 135 years in federal prison in April 2004 for molesting 14 boys and girls whose parents were members of his group. He currently is in a federal maximum security prison in Colorado.

York founded the Nuwaubians in New York in the late 1960s and moved the sect to rural Putnam County in 1993.

After York was sentenced, the federal government seized the 476-acre Putnam County Nuwaubian compound in August 2004 and sold it in June 2005, turning over more than \$500,000 to the county. Federal agents also seized about \$1 million in property and cash in Athens.

In October, a federal appeals court upheld York's conviction and sentence. His attorney had argued that federal prosecutors improperly applied federal racketeering laws and the grand jury was tainted by pretrial publicity.

But the three-judge panel of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said York failed to show that the notoriety of his case "substantially influenced" the decision to indict him.

The judges also noted that the trial jury was instructed to consider each count of the indictment separately and acquitted York of two of the 13 counts.

Nuwaubians: Grand Jury says independent panel should probe jail

**Athens Banner-Herald/July 14, 2006
By Joe Johnson**

A grand jury has called for an independent agency to investigate the Clarke County Sheriff's Office because of "inappropriate" activities at the jail involving deputies belonging to a black supremacist religious sect whose leader is serving a 135-year federal prison sentence.

In its report, made public Thursday afternoon, the Clarke County grand jury said it heard testimony about communications between deputies and United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors leader Dwight "Malachi" York, and that the sheriff's office did not have a current policy and procedure manual that addresses deputies "consorting with known convicted felons." The report also said that deputies were recruiting prisoners into the sect.

"We have spent (a) considerable amount of time investigating the serious allegations raised concerning the sheriff's office," the report states. "Due to time constraints, a general conclusion cannot be reached at this time. The grand jury feels that further independent investigation is required and necessary in this matter."

The grand jury's 10-page presentment, which included 32 pages of exhibits, contained only two paragraphs concerning the investigation into Nuwaubian activities at the jail. All of the exhibits, and most of the presentment, concerned the panel's inspection of voting machines and the process of recording "physical" and electronic votes.

The panel's foreman, Athens attorney Jeff Rothman, said he could not comment about the

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presentment because of grand jury secrecy rules, but said he was "disappointed because each time the grand jury went off script, I believe roadblocks appeared to frustrate the grand jury and compromise its independence and integrity."

Among other things, Rothman referred to an attempt by Athens-Clarke County Attorney Bill Berryman to quash grand jury subpoenas issued to Nuwaubian deputies and Berryman's motion to allow Clarke County Sheriff Ira Edwards to have his response to the presentment published as an addendum to the panel's findings.

Clarke County Superior Court Judge Steve Jones denied the motion during a hearing Thursday morning, and Edwards' response was made an official court document when Berryman refiled an earlier motion, amending it by including the sheriff's response as an exhibit.

In his response, Edwards countered that in calling for an independent investigation, the grand jury "ignored" evidence that the sheriff's office was already investigating Nuwaubian activities at the jail.

"The grand jury's review of this issue coincided with a sheriff's office internal investigation of the same matter which, upon advice of counsel, had been ongoing for several months," Edwards said.

According to the response, Edwards told the grand jury about the need to protect employees' constitutional rights to due process and freedom of speech and association, and that based on the facts initially brought to his attention, the Nuwaubian deputies were not engaging in prohibited activities.

Edwards said his office was in the process of reviewing policies and procedures at the jail, and expected revisions would be made by this fall.

He vigorously disputed the grand jury's claim that an independent investigation of his office was needed.

"The sheriff's office is committed to a thorough and complete investigation of these serious allegations and has no bias or interest in favoring any group, religion or sect," Edwards said. "If policy violations occurred, then any employee who commits such infractions will be dealt with in a manner consistent with policy and applicable law, and the Internal Affairs team has been instructed to vigorously pursue the investigation."

When a 23-member grand jury was impaneled for the April term to consider criminal indictments, it also was instructed by the district attorney's office to inspect county voting machines and the jail.

"While investigating security and conditions at the Athens-Clarke County Jail, the grand jury heard testimony alleging inappropriate proselytizing/ recruitment of jail inmates by deputies affiliated with the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors sect," the panel's presentment states. "The grand jury further heard testimony confirming attempted correspondence between certain deputies and (York), who is currently a convicted felon and prisoner at the Federal Administrative Maximum Security Prison in Florence, Colo."

The panel's investigation came soon after Edwards fired his chief jailer, Brett Hart, who initiated the internal affairs investigation of Nuwaubian deputies, who Hart described as a disruptive and racially divisive influence at the jail.

Three Nuwaubian deputies testified before the grand jury, including one who actually wrote a letter to York telling the Nuwaubian leader he heeded York's call for "brothers" to join law enforcement. Three Nuwaubian deputies were later suspended, including one who appeared before the grand jury.

In response to the grand jury's assertions that the sheriff's office lacked policies forbidding certain inappropriate behavior by deputies, Edwards said there are "effective policies in place"

concerning deputies associating with convicted felons.

"While all policies are currently under review, they will be revised appropriately and/or if needed to obtain accreditation through the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police state certification program," Edwards said. "With all due respect to the grand jury, agencies cannot revise policies simply because others disagree with interpretations reached based upon the circumstances. Any changes or applications of policy must involve factual scrutiny and protect the constitutional rights of all involved."

Edwards said in his statement he would welcome outside assistance in the jail investigation.

"Because the investigation is continuing, the information by the grand jury was incomplete, and its conclusions that the sheriff's office cannot properly conduct such an investigation seems based, in part, on a possible misunderstanding of well-established state and federal law regarding the rights of public employees," Edwards said. "While the sheriff's office is continuing its investigation, it also actively seeks, and will welcome, investigative assistance from a qualified and objective agency or individual."

York ad removed

Macon Telegraph/July 15, 2006
By Travis Fain

An image of Malachi York, the leader of the Nuwaubian movement who is serving a federal sentence for child molestation, has been gracing the side of a Macon public bus.

It's not clear how long advertisements proclaiming the innocence of the cult leader were on the bus, but Macon Transit Authority

Chairwoman Lynn Cass said the signs should be down by this morning.

"We'd told them two weeks ago to take it off," Cass said. "Obviously they did not."

Advertising on the buses is handled by Lamar Advertising through a contract with the authority. Someone called Cass about the signs, which she said were on one bus and a bus-stop bench. She called authority general manager Carl Jackson, who then called Lamar Advertising to remove the signs.

"It's not a good representation of the authority and its citizens," Jackson said.

Ryan Terrell, of Lamar Advertising, said all the signs should have been down some time ago, but one was still on a bus as recently as Friday.

York, who at times has claimed to be from another planet, was convicted on 10 counts of child molestation and racketeering in 2004. He was sentenced to 135 years in federal prison, and authorities seized and then sold the Nuwaubian compound in Putnam County, which featured pyramids and other Egyptian-style buildings.

Some of York's followers continue to proclaim his innocence and, in May, a billboard was put up in Putnam County showing York's picture and the Web site.

The bus advertisements reference the same site, which is full of various Nuwaubian philosophies. There's one section on the "conspiracy, judicial misconduct and prosecutorial vindictiveness involved in the case against an innocent man, Rev. Dr. Malachi Z. York."

Attempts to reach a Nuwaubian representative were not successful Friday. There was no answer at the telephone number listed on the Web site, and Terrell said he could not give out contact information for whoever ordered the advertising. Terrell also said he couldn't disclose how much was paid for the ads.

Ex-jail chief files complaint over firing

Athens Banner-Herald/July 18, 2006
By Joe Johnson

The former commander of the Clarke County Jail has filed a complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission claiming he was fired because he is white and he pressed an investigation into whether local jailers were recruiting prisoners into a black separatist sect.

Brett Hart alleges in his complaint that "Caucasian employees, including (myself), were treated worse than the black employees" after Sheriff Ira Edwards, who is black, took office in January 2001.

The 45-year-old said Edwards' decision to fire him three months ago was racially motivated and came as he was looking into deputies' involvement in the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors black supremacist sect and a "conspiracy by several (Nuwaubian) deputies to introduce contraband into the jail."

"The Nuwaubians have been identified by local and federal law enforcement authorities as a radical black separatist group with links to organized crime," Hart said in his July 14 letter to the EEOC. "As the investigation progressed, (I) met increasing resistance from Sheriff Ira Edwards and his staff."

Edwards' spokesman, interim Chief Deputy Sheriff Jack Mitchell, denied Hart's charges.

"Since this is an ongoing personnel matter, we cannot comment on the specifics at this time," Mitchell said Monday. "Sheriff Edwards denies the allegations, however, and emphasizes that employment decisions made by the sheriff's office are without regard to race, religion or other alleged protected characteristics."

In November 2000, Edwards unseated white incumbent Jerry Massey, who hired Hart.

Hart referred questions to his attorneys, who were out of state and unavailable.

Hart started an internal affairs investigation in early March, after the Federal Bureau of Prisons informed him that a Clarke deputy was corresponding with Dwight "Malachi" York, the Nuwaubian leader who is serving a 135-year federal prison sentence. York was convicted in 2004 on child molestation, racketeering, tax evasion and other charges.

Two weeks after he was fired, Hart claims in the EEOC complaint, "the jail deputy who had originally written to York wrote a second letter to York wherein he admitted to smuggling contraband into the jail for distribution to the black inmates on behalf of York."

Hart also said, in a previous interview, that he verbally reprimanded a deputy for giving a prisoner a York-authored book, "Was Adam Black or White," which Hart deemed racially divisive, and later found the book in the same prisoner's cell.

Over the past two months, the Clarke County grand jury also apparently studied whether there was a connection between Edwards' decision to fire Hart and Hart's investigation of Nuwaubian influence at the jail.

The panel's report, filed Thursday, does not go into detail about testimony of Nuwaubian activity at the jail but calls for an independent body to continue to investigate.

Edwards defended the way his office investigated allegations of misconduct.

"The sheriff's office is committed to a thorough and complete investigation of these serious allegations and has no bias or interest in favoring any group, religion or sect," Edwards said in an official response to the grand jury's findings. "If policy violations occurred, then any employee who commits such infractions will be

dealt with in a manner consistent with policy and applicable law, and the Internal Affairs team has been instructed to vigorously pursue the investigation."

The sheriff said an internal investigation into alleged Nuwaubian activity has continued for several months, and that he would welcome help from an outside agency, including the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

"Preliminary discussions have occurred with the GBI to evaluate whether investigative assistance from that agency would be appropriate and available," Mitchell said. "However, no decisions or commitments by the GBI have been made."

Lawyer: Client given cult literature

Athens Banner-Herald/August 4, 2006

By Joe Johnson

A Clarke County sheriff's deputy distributed black supremacist literature even as a Clarke County grand jury and the sheriff's office investigated alleged cult activity at the county jail, according to a defense attorney who represents a prisoner at the jail.

Deputies affiliated with the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors sect have used "every opportunity" to try to indoctrinate his client and other prisoners, said defense lawyer Dean Clark, adding that a deputy gave one of his clients at the jail a book written by cult leader Dwight "Malachi" York as recently as two weeks ago.

Clark's client is Bobby Leon Martin, one of three people awaiting trial for the Jan. 4 shooting death of Kentora Thomas in East Athens.

"The last time I saw Bobby at the jail he gave me the book (the deputy) gave him," Clark said. "He told me previously how (deputies) will talk to inmates every chance they get about how great the Nuwaubians are and give them books."

Sheriff Ira Edwards did not respond to questions e-mailed Thursday to his spokesman, interim Chief Deputy Sheriff Jack Mitchell, about whether the distribution of the Nuwaubian literature violated policy and if the deputy involved faced discipline.

Clark said his client didn't buy into Nuwaubian teachings. He said after Martin spoke to a sheriff's official about alleged cult activity at the jail, a Nuwaubian deputy "basically told him, 'You're playing with fire, and you shouldn't be disrespecting us by talking to these investigators.'"

In the book the deputy allegedly gave Martin, "Who Rolled the Stone?" York asserts that Jesus did not die from crucifixion but lived to be 102, and that it was actually Judas who was entombed and later removed to be hung from a tree to make it look like suicide.

In the book, Jesus, the Disciples and other key figures in the New Testament are portrayed as being black.

Speaking on attempts to kill the newborn Jesus and the Crucifixion, York compared Jesus to the leader of the Branch Davidian sect, which had 76 members killed in 1993 after a 51-day stand-off with federal law enforcement officials.

"Anyone who thinks that they are the Messiah or Christ, they are killed," York wrote. "Like David Koresh, as soon as he claimed to be Christ the government came down on him and bombed his whole community in Waco, Texas."

Before his arrest in 2002, York lived with hundreds of followers in his own 476-acre community in Eatonton called "Tama-Re."

The April term of the Clarke County grand jury issued a report calling for an independent body

to investigate Nuwaubian recruitment activities at the jail. One of the deputies remained [in] touch with the sect's leader, York, a convicted felon serving a 135-year federal prison sentence.

Edwards responded, saying his office already was investigating whether Nuwaubian deputies acted inappropriately. He also said in a separate statement he told grand jurors about the need to protect deputies' rights, including the freedoms of speech and association, and that based on the facts initially brought to his attention, the Nuwaubian deputies were not engaging in prohibited activities.

Edwards disputed the grand jury's claim that an independent investigation of his office was needed.

The internal affairs investigation began in March after then-jail commander Brett Hart was notified by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons that a letter from a Clarke deputy to York was intercepted at a federal maximum security prison in Colorado, where York is serving a 135-year sentence on child molestation, racketeering and other convictions. Hart has said deputies corresponding with a convicted felon was a violation of jail policy and possibly criminal.

Hart was fired in April, and he contends in a complaint filed last month with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunities Commission that he was let go in part because he was looking into deputies' involvement with the Nuwaubians.

Sheriff fires 4 deputies after investigating Nuwaubian link

Associated Press/November 23, 2006

Athens, Georgia - An investigation into whether five deputies violated jail policy because of their connection to the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors religious sect has resulted in the firing of four deputies and the resignation of a fifth, Clarke County Sheriff Ira Edwards said.

"The investigation revealed varied policy violations which undermined the safety and security of the jail," Edwards said.

Edwards would not say who the deputies were or specify what policies were violated.

But an Aug. 17 report by the sheriff's Internal Investigations Unit identified the deputies as Cpl. Anthony Montgomery and deputies Rena Jennings, Leon Adams, William York and Bobby Nixon.

The report, which was obtained by the Athens Banner-Herald through a state Open Records Act request, said some of the deputies encouraged "inmates to rebel against white deputies" and "not to give black officers problems."

The report said inmates who embraced Nuwaubian beliefs were given preferential treatment by the jailers who shared those beliefs.

Edwards' investigation included investigating claims that the deputies recruited prisoners into the sect. The sheriff's office looked into claims that at least one deputy stayed in touch with Dwight "Malachi" York, the leader of the predominantly black sect who is currently serving a 135-year federal prison sentence.

The five deputies were placed on administrative leave in July. Two other deputies resigned after former jail commander Brett Hart, started to investigate Nuwaubian activities.

Hart and other jailers said they thought Nuwaubian activities undermined safety at the jail and some white deputies worried that black colleagues might take the side of a black prisoner if a fight broke out along racial lines.

The internal report supported Hart's concerns.

"Certain deputies who hold the Nuwaubian beliefs have become upset when inmates make fun of Nuwaubians and Malachi York, which causes a disruption in their ability to supervise and control inmates," the report said. "Deputies are expressing serious concern that something is going to happen and they will not have proper or prompt backup. This is a real concern of deputies that are working now and the deputies that have left. This environment is having a high impact on morale and retention."

Hart started an internal investigation in March when the U.S. Bureau of Prisons informed him the federal maximum security prison in Colorado had intercepted a letter from a Clarke County deputy to York.

York was sentenced in April 2004 for molesting 14 boys and girls whose parents were members of his group. York founded the religious sect in New York in the late 1960s and moved it to rural Putnam County in 1993.

Ex-deputies get more time to appeal firings

Athens Banner-Herald/January 4, 2007

By Joe Johnson

Four former Clarke County deputies accused of undermining jail security through their ties to a black supremacist cult were supposed to argue for their jobs this week, but a hearings officer postponed the appeals to give the ex-deputies more time to prepare.

The deputies were fired in November after a Clarke County Sheriff's Office internal investigation found they encouraged black inmates to rebel against white deputies and recruited inmates into the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors sect.

The former deputies still are gathering documents and witnesses for their hearings, according to Denny Galis, a private attorney who acts as the county's personnel hearing officer. "They will be allowed to present evidence and call on witnesses," Galis said.

The former deputies also may be represented by attorneys at the hearings, Galis said, but as of this week he only knew of one who has legal representation, Rena Jennings.

Jennings' attorney, John M. Clark of Elberton, would not discuss the pending appeal.

Only one of the fired deputies had a new hearing date as of Wednesday, according to Athens-Clarke Human Resources Director Harry Owens. While William York is scheduled to make his case on Jan. 29, Jennings, Anthony Montgomery and Bobby Dixon don't have new hearing dates.

The sheriff's office allowed a fifth Nuwaubian deputy, Leon Adams, to resign in lieu of termination. But by resigning, Adams forfeited his right to appeal, Owens said.

Nuwaubian deputies first came under scrutiny by sheriff's officials in March, when the officials were notified by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons that it had intercepted a letter from Montgomery to the Nuwaubians' spiritual leader, Dwight "Malachi" York, a convicted felon. York is serving a 135-year sentence in a maximum security federal prison for child molestation, racketeering, money laundering and other crimes.

The former deputies' appeals hearings will mark the first time in two years that a fired county employee formally has sought reinstatement, Owens said.

In 2005, two former Athens-Clarke police officers failed to convince Athens-Clarke Manager Alan Reddish to give them back their jobs after they were fired for providing alcohol to an underage woman, who also had sex with one of the officers and the officer's wife.

Normally when a county employee is fired, he first appeals to the manager, and then can take the appeal one step further to the personnel hearing officer. But when the employee works for an elected official, like the sheriff, the appeal goes directly to the hearing officer.

All five former deputies were on paid suspension for three months before they were fired.

After interviewing deputies and inmates, and allowing the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to administer lie-detector tests, sheriff's investigators concluded that Nuwaubian deputies were a serious disruptive influence at the jail. "By the intentional introduction of unauthorized Nuwaubian literature and beliefs into the jail environment, the daily safety and security of the jail has been breached," according to a report on the investigation.

Sheriff 'candid' on cult

Grand jury praises Edwards' response

Athens Banner-Herald/January 5, 2007

By Allison Floyd

A Clarke County grand jury has found that Sheriff Ira Edwards adequately responded to concerns that members of a black supremacist cult had infiltrated the county jail as they tried to attract jailers and inmates into the sect.

The 190-word presentment filed Wednesday focuses on the sheriff's communication - lauding him for a "candid, appropriate and professional" response to an earlier grand jury's concerns.

But the finding doesn't describe any actions the sheriff took to address security concerns at the jail and says critical newspaper editorials and articles prompted the grand jury to study the sheriff's "response" to a previous grand jury's findings. The sheriff fired four deputies and allowed another to resign in November, but the grand jury's presentment doesn't mention those actions.

The sheriff's office, which answers media questions only through e-mail, refused to respond to four questions Thursday, offering to answer by the end of the business day today.

Sheriff's investigators began as early as March to investigate connections between the Clarke County Jail and the United Nation of Nuwaubian Moors - a cult led by convicted child molester Malachi York.>

Former Chief Deputy Brett Hart, who started to look into Nuwaubian ties in the jail after he learned at least one jailer was corresponding with York, was abruptly fired in April. Edwards

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said only that he'd decided "to go in a different direction," requiring a management change.

The sheriff's office initially found that deputies did not break policies by communicating with York in federal prison or by distributing cult books to inmates.

A previous grand jury launched its own inquiry, and after an inmate complained that he felt three Nuwaubian deputies were pressuring him to rebel against white jailers, the sheriff's office launched a second internal investigation.

That grand jury, which was led by Athens attorney Jeff Rothman, ended its term in July with a recommendation that an independent agency review the sheriff's office or the next grand jury continue to study the connection.

The current grand jury issued its findings and recommendations this week.

The grand jury's recommendations included: Support of voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) voting machines, another topic considered by the previous grand jury.

A pay raise for grand jury bailiffs from \$60 to \$75 a day.

Creation of a grand jury log to provide better continuity from one grand jury to another, allowing subsequent panels to follow up on business left unfinished by the previous group.

Only one page of the presentment addressed the sheriff's office, though two press releases from Edwards were attached to the report, one issued in July and published on the Banner-Herald's Web site, and a second issued in November, but not published by the newspaper.

The grand jury didn't recommend any actions in regards to the jail. Hart, who now works for a jail in another jurisdiction and has filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission over his firing, said he didn't view the grand jury's work as a continuation of the previous panel.

"I feel that (the current grand jurors) did exactly what they said they did," Hart said Thursday. "They read what Sheriff Edwards published after the last grand jury presentment and formed their own opinion.

And they have a right to do that. "I wouldn't call that an investigation and I don't think it was presented as such."

The previous grand jury started its inquiry too late in the term to finish its work, Hart said, but a grand jury could review the department thoroughly enough to satisfy him.

"If you compare what the previous grand jury tried to do - compared to what this grand jury did, which is just basically review Sheriff's Edwards statements - the previous grand jury made a concerted effort to investigate," he said. "I can't characterize what this grand jury did as an investigation. The elements of investigation aren't there."

A transcript of the grand jury's presentment Athens-Clarke County Sheriff Committee, Blaine A. Norris, Committee Chair.

In light of recent newspaper editorials and stories about a supposed lack of response by Sheriff Edwards concerning certain issues at the Sheriff's Office and Jail raised by the April 2006 Grand Jury resentment, the Grand Jury appointed a committee to consider Sheriff Ira Edward's response to the previous Grand Jury presentment. The Grand Jury appreciated learning of Sheriff Edwards written response to the prior Grand Jury presentment that was filed by Sheriff Edwards just a few days after the presentment, (a copy attached hereto as Exhibit A) and the Grand Jury found very informative the Sheriff's recent press release on these matters (copy attached hereto as Exhibit B) that for some reason was not published by the local newspaper. The Grand Jury believes that Sheriff Edwards took seriously the Grand Jury's prior presentment, and believe that his response has been candid, appropriate and professional - as is to be expected of any elected public official - despite the tone of recent editorials suggesting

the contrary. The Grand Jury extends its sincerest thank you to Sheriff Edwards for his cooperation and openness in this process and his continued service to this community.

Fired sheriff's deputy fights to be reinstated

**Athens Banner-Herald,
Georgia/January 30, 2007
By Joe Johnson**

An ex-Clarke County sheriff's deputy spent hours Monday grilling former superiors, colleagues and others in a bid to win back his job after he was fired for practicing a black supremacist cult's beliefs at the jail.

William York is one of four deputies who were fired in November after an internal sheriff's investigation concluded they compromised security at the jail by recruiting prisoners into the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

The three other former deputies also have appealed, and more hearings will be held through March.

A fifth deputy affiliated with the Nuwaubians resigned after the jail probe.

The first deputy to appeal was York, who changed his last name from Walker after he resigned in 2004 from the Macon Police Department to protest that the department wouldn't investigate Nuwaubians' claims that their leader was innocent.

York and the other fired deputies followed Dwight "Malachi" York, the Nuwaubian's leader who is serving a 135-year federal prison

sentence on child molestation, racketeering, money laundering and other charges.

William York could have hired an attorney to argue that he be reinstated, but instead he chose to represent himself, according to Athens attorney Dean Clark, who York subpoenaed.

Clark would not say what questions York asked him during the hearing at the Athens-Clarke County Department of Human Resources on Satula Avenue.

York gave one of Clark's clients Nuwaubian literature while the man was a prisoner at the Clarke County Jail, Clark has said before.

Other people called to testify at the appeals hearings included Jail Commander Jack Mitchell and Chief Deputy Sheriff Gene Mays, according to Clark.

The hearing, which started at 9 a.m., may continue today, according to the sheriff's spokesman, Capt. Eric Pozen.

"We don't know for sure if it's continued or not for (today), but that appears to be the case," he said.

Even if York's hearing lasted only one day, the administrative hearing officer - who acts as a judge - doesn't usually issue a decision the same day as the hearing, Pozen said.

York, Rena Jennings, Anthony Montgomery and Bobby Dixon all were fired after the sheriff's investigation concluded they jeopardized safety and security at the jail by, among other things, encouraging inmates to rebel against white deputies and not give black deputies any problems.

The deputies also violated policy by distributing Nuwaubian literature to inmates and trying to recruit inmates into their sect, according to an Aug. 17 report by the sheriff's office Internal Investigations Unit.

Montgomery's appeal hearing is scheduled for Feb. 19, Dixon's for March 5 and Jennings' for March 19.

A fifth deputy, Leon Adams, did not appeal; he was allowed to resign in lieu of termination.

Fired deputy denied

Former jailer loses bid to get job back

Athens Banner-Herald/February 9, 2007

By Todd DeFeo

A Clarke County sheriff's deputy who was fired after investigators learned he was recruiting prisoners into a black supremacist cult will not be reinstated, a personnel hearing officer decided.

But the hearing officer upheld the sheriff's decision to fire William York based on job failures unrelated to the former jailer's ties to the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

York tried to manipulate a polygraph test and could not be contacted while on administrative leave, according to a two-page decision handed down by Denny Galis, a personnel hearing officer for the county.

York and four other deputies with suspected Nuwaubian ties were placed on administrative leave last summer; four were fired in November and the fifth was allowed to resign.

York and three other deputies appealed their firings following a sheriff's department internal investigation determined that their Nuwaubian involvement led them to break policies at the Clarke County Jail.

Evidence that York was connected to "possible Nuwaubian activities was inconclusive at best and did not play a role in my decision," Galis said in the decision.

York tried to alter the results of a polygraph given during the internal investigation test by "controlling breath," which caused the results to be inconclusive. The former deputy continued to control his breath even after the polygraph examiner asked him to stop, according to the internal investigation.

Galis said a GBI polygraph examiner's testimony that York tried to manipulate the examination was "very credible."

York also "was not reachable as required while he was on administrative leave with pay," Galis said.

York declined to explain why he didn't return a message from his employer, according to Galis' decision, which Athens-Clarke County released Friday, after officials informed York.

The internal investigation completed last year concluded, in part, that the fired deputies undermined jail security by recruiting prisoners into their sect and urging inmates to rebel against white deputies.

According to the sheriff's probe, York and the other fired deputies - Rena Jennings, Anthony Montgomery and Bobby Dixon - followed the teachings of Nuwaubian leader Dwight "Malachi" York. The leader is serving a 135-year federal prison sentence on child molestation, racketeering, money laundering and other charges.

In addition to urging black inmates to give white deputies a hard time and not give black jailers any problems, the internal investigation concluded the fired deputies also violated policy by distributing Nuwaubian literature to inmates and trying to recruit inmates into their sect.

Some Nuwaubian deputies were upset by inmates who made fun of the group and its leader, the investigation found.

During a Jan. 29 appeals hearing, York cross-examined former superior officers, colleagues and others. The former deputy could have had an attorney, but chose to represent himself, officials said.

A fifth deputy affiliated with the Nuwaubians, Leon Adams, did not appeal, as he was allowed to resign in lieu of termination.

Another deputy to appeal firing today

Athens Banner-Herald/February 19, 2007

By Joe Johnson

A former Clarke County jailer and black supremacist cult member apparently will argue for his job back today, though an appeals officer earlier this month refused to reinstate another deputy fired at the same time.

Anthony Montgomery did not withdraw his appeal, even after former deputy and fellow sect member William York's appeal was denied Feb. 7, according to attorney Denny Galis, a personnel hearing officer for Athens-Clarke County.

Montgomery, a former corporal at the Clarke County jail, is expected to show up this morning to make his case in a hearing at the Department of Human Resources building on Satula Avenue, Galis said.

In November, Clarke County Sheriff Ira Edwards fired four deputies affiliated with the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors and allowed a fifth to resign after an internal affairs

investigation concluded they undermined jail security and broke policy by recruiting inmates into their cult.

All four fired deputies appealed, and York was the first to have an appeals hearing. Montgomery's will be the second.

Despite a laundry list of policy violations, most of which concerned Nuwaubian-related activities while on the job, Galis upheld York's termination on two grounds: He tried to manipulate a polygraph test and couldn't be contacted while on paid administrative leave.

Galis would not comment on his decision last week, other than to say, "It is what it is."

But Galis may have avoided the deputy's connections with the Nuwaubians, instead focusing on other, non-religious complaints about his job performance, according to Athens attorney Penn Dodson, who specializes in labor and employment law.

"A lot of it might be (Galis) not wanting to get into the entanglements as to whether a policy itself might violate some kind of religious rights," Dodson said. "He may have thought, 'If there are a couple of reasons (for firing the deputies) that are legitimate with no potential grounding in religion, then let's just deal with those and not get bogged down in the quagmire of controversy on whether the policy implicated religious practices directly.'"

The Nuwaubians' leader, Dwight "Malachi" York, is serving a 135-year federal prison sentence after he was convicted of racketeering, money laundering, multiple counts of child molestation and other charges.

The Southern Poverty Law Center lists the Nuwaubians as a "black separatist" hate group, and said Dwight York "claimed at various times to be a space alien and God in the flesh."

York had a mansion in Athens and his followers lived in a sprawling compound in Putnam County where, according to the SPLC, "York

told his followers they were building a sovereign nation where they would be free from the influence of white 'devils.' "

Some of the former deputies used to be police officers in Macon, and quit their jobs there because city officials wouldn't investigate their claims that a conspiracy led to Dwight York's conviction.

At the Clarke County Jail, Nuwaubian deputies urged inmates to rebel against white deputies and ridiculed inmates for their Christian or Muslim beliefs, according to the internal investigation report.

The sheriff's investigation determined Montgomery broke a policy when he wrote letters to the Nuwaubian leader at a maximum security prison in Colorado, but the report also cited a host of policies and sheriff's codes of conduct that the deputies violated. Among other things, according to the internal investigation report, the deputies didn't keep personal activities separate from professional duties, weren't truthful, neglected duties, associated with criminals, harassed or discriminated against inmates and distributed literature to prisoners.

Though the appeal for his job was denied, William York can turn to civil court, but the burden to prove he was wrongfully fired is higher in court, Dodson said.

"The chances of a successful appeal (are) generally diminished at every level of appeal," Dodson said. "Generally, a lot of deference is given to lower courts, unless there's something glaringly wrong or the judge just misunderstood the law."

Two other former deputies, Rena Jennings and Bobby Dixon, are scheduled for administrative appeals hearings next month. The deputy who was allowed to resign in lieu of termination, Leon Adams, did not request a hearing.

Deputy's firing in Nuwaubian case is upheld

Second appeal to fail

Athens Banner-Herald/March 3, 2007

By Joe Johnson

A former deputy flagrantly violated jail policies when he wrote to a convicted child molester, vowing to try to free the cult leader, and the Clarke County Sheriff's Office was justified in firing the deputy, a county personnel hearing officer has ruled.

Anthony Montgomery, a former corporal at the jail, broke policy when he corresponded with Dwight "Malachi" York, the imprisoned leader of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors black supremacist group, hearing officer Denny Galis wrote in his Tuesday decision, which county officials released late Thursday.

"As to the employee's code of conduct violations, the most egregious included his correspondence with a convicted felon, including offers to help gain the felon's release," Galis wrote.

The former deputy also violated policy by distributing Nuwaubian literature to prisoners at the Clarke County Jail, Galis ruled.

"By his own admission, (Montgomery) facilitated certain inmates getting publications from outside the jail instead of directing the inmates to the proper department in the jail," Galis wrote. "As evidenced by the aforementioned correspondence, (Montgomery) was attempting to promulgate a particular philosophy or point of view."

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Montgomery was the second of four former deputies with Nuwaubian ties to unsuccessfully appeal to get his job back. He appealed the sheriff's decision to terminate him during a daylong hearing Feb. 19, and two more hearings are scheduled for this month.

Dressed in the Nuwaubians' Egyptian-inspired garb, the former deputy insisted at his hearing that the investigation leading to his termination was shoddy, relying mostly on hearsay statements of inmates and other uncorroborated evidence.

Galis said in his decision that Montgomery failed to "overcome his burden of proof" that he was improperly fired.

The four deputies who were fired, and a fifth who was allowed to resign, came under scrutiny after jail officials learned last March that Montgomery wrote a letter to York. No policy violations were found at the time, even though York is serving a 135-year federal prison sentence for convictions on racketeering, money laundering, child molestation and other charges.

The Southern Poverty Law Center lists the Nuwaubians as a "black separatist" hate group, and said York "claimed at various times to be a space alien and God in the flesh."

York had a mansion in Athens and his followers lived in a sprawling compound in Eatonton where, according to the SPLC, "York told his followers they were building a sovereign nation where they would be free from the influence of white 'devils.' "

York sexually molested children of his followers both in Athens and at the Putnam County compound, federal prosecutors said.

In the March 2006 letter to York, Montgomery introduced himself as one of his followers who "answered the call when you suggested that brothers join law enforcement agencies."

Though they didn't find policy violations immediately, sheriff's officials learned

Nuwaubian literature was circulating in the jail, so they reminded deputies about the policy forbidding deputies from distributing unauthorized literature.

The reminder didn't deter Montgomery.

The next month, in April 2006, he sent the imprisoned Nuwaubian leader another letter in which he flouted the policy.

"I have still managed to propagate our doctrine to many of the inmates" at the Clarke County Jail, Montgomery wrote. "The administration at the jail really doesn't want our books in the jail but they can't stop Pops. I have many scrolls circulating in the jail.

"The irony is that every day I work here, though, makes me realize more and more that YOU DON'T BELONG IN PRISON! This is why I continue to fight for your freedom."

The letter was sent to York at a federal maximum security prison in Colorado, and was intercepted by U.S. Bureau of Prison officials who notified the sheriff's office.

Montgomery listed in the same letter ways he and other Nuwaubians were trying to win York's freedom, including a public relations campaign that used newspaper advertisements, billboards and a Web site, www.heisinnocent.com.

The former deputy told York that Nuwaubians "had "hit the streets" to spread the cult's doctrine.

"This will not only inform people of your innocence, but will save souls and unite the family under our doctrine of Wu-Nuwaubu," the former deputy's letter said. "We support Africa because that is FIRST. We will put BABA in AFRICA!"

Sheriff told to reinstate deputy in Nuwaubian case

**Athens Banner-Herald,
Georgia/March 28, 2007
By Joe Johnson**

The Clarke County sheriff must reinstate a deputy he fired last year for allegedly undermining jail security through his involvement in a black supremacist cult.

While Bobby Dixon should be disciplined for two of the five policy violations sheriff's officials cited when they fired him in November, Dixon did not deserve to lose his job, personnel hearing officer Denny Galis ruled.

Galis did not recommend what discipline the sheriff should impose.

Dixon and three other deputies were fired after an internal investigation determined they violated jail policies by distributing literature from the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, recruiting inmates into the cult and urging inmates to rebel against white deputies. A fifth deputy with Nuwaubian ties was allowed to resign in lieu of termination.

Dixon should be disciplined for not returning a phone call while he was on administrative leave and for having "general conversations" with other deputies during a sheriff's internal investigation into Nuwaubian activities at the Clarke County Jail, Galis said.

An assistant county attorney representing the Clarke County Sheriff's Office immediately notified Galis by fax that the county would appeal the ruling, but Galis said in an interview that his ruling is binding.

"Whatever they file, I'm going to respond to it, but as far as I know, that's it," Galis said of his decision.

Galis, who has served as the county's personnel hearing officer for several years, said the local government has never appealed his decision to reinstate an employee.

Nevertheless, Sheriff Ira Edwards' office released a statement Tuesday saying officials hope Galis will reconsider.

"Parties commonly ask for reconsideration when they contend that a decision, for instance, has overlooked important circumstances or contains errors that require a further review of the record," the statement said.

The sheriff's office alleged that Dixon violated a code titled "Be willing to act," because he failed to remove a sign from an inmate's cell that had to do with the inmate's Nuwaubian beliefs.

But Galis said a superior officer could have taken action against Dixon at that time, but did not.

"Deputy Dixon apparently overlooked this sign in his rounds and another deputy removed it," Galis wrote in his decision. When a supervisor confronted Dixon about not removing the sign, Galis said, "This was an opportunity for some form of minor discipline, but none was administered."

The sheriff's office also asserted that Dixon "caused a disruption in his ability to supervise and control inmates" when he pulled an inmate from his cell to berate him for mocking Dixon's Nuwaubian beliefs.

During an internal investigation after the inmate filed a grievance, a deputy who witnessed the exchange said Dixon "followed protocol" because the inmate was being disruptive. The deputy's statement was used to dismiss the grievance, yet wasn't mentioned in the written reasons the sheriff's office gave for firing Dixon, Galis said.

"Why that statement was omitted was never explained and remains a mystery to me," Galis wrote. "Omitting an apparently key piece of evidence from the disciplinary report, particularly one that tends to exonerate the employee, does not substantially comply with sound management principles and is not consistent with policies and procedures of Athens-Clarke County."

Galis previously upheld the firings of former deputies William York and Anthony Montgomery, and an appeals hearing for former deputy Rena Jennings has not been scheduled.

Galis upheld York's termination, finding that he violated policy when he tried to manipulate a polygraph test and couldn't be contacted while on paid administrative leave.

When upholding Montgomery's termination, the hearings officer said the former deputy flagrantly disregarded jail policy by writing to the Nuwaubians' imprisoned leader, Dwight "Malachi" York, who is serving a 135-year federal prison sentence for convictions on child molestation, racketeering, money laundering and other charges.

Demolition Man

Radar Magazine/March/April 2007

By Ethan Brown

What's up with Wesley? An indictment for tax fraud, an affinity for extremist groups, and a private militia, for starters

In the 1998 film *U.S. Marshals*, the sequel to *The Fugitive*, Wesley Snipes took part in a cemetery shoot-out, performed a Tarzan-style rope swing from the roof of a skyscraper onto a moving train, and took a special agent hostage. But those who'd been hoping for a real-life *Fugitive* sequel when he was arrested in

December for tax fraud and conspiracy would be sorely disappointed. Despite a long flight from Namibia, he appeared well-rested and characteristically reserved in a charcoal suit and matching blue shirt and tie that set off his graying Van Dyke.

Two tense months had passed since a judge unsealed an indictment by a Florida grand jury alleging that the 44-year-old actor had not paid the IRS a dime since 1999. Having relied on the advice of radical tax activists, Snipes allegedly attempted to defraud the government with \$14 million in bogus bills of exchange. For most of that time, until surfacing in the Namib Desert, where he'd been filming an apocalyptic western called *GallowWalker*, Snipes had remained out of sight. Noting that Namibia's lack of an extradition treaty with the U.S. has made it a haven for high-profile Americans fleeing justice, media reports described him as "on the lam." Snipes's silence only served to fan the speculation. In fact, shortly after the indictment was made public, his attorneys began intense negotiations with prosecutors regarding the conditions of his appearance. On December 8, he boarded a chartered jet from Namibia for a flight to the U.S., emerging 27 hours later to turn himself in to IRS agents-and, later, face a crowd of reporters outside the federal courthouse in downtown Ocala, Florida.

"Little cold out here," he said with an uncomfortable laugh as he stepped forward to address the scrum. "Big difference from Namibia." But with the temperature in the mid-60s, blaming the weather seemed a stretch. The tax charges alone could land Snipes in prison for up to 16 years-enough time in an orange jumpsuit to chill anyone's blood.

The conditions of the actor's release were surprisingly lenient: After posting a \$1 million bond, he was allowed to return to Namibia to finish shooting. J.J. MacNab, an expert who is writing a book on the fringe anti-tax movement, found the arrangement odd. "It's the only case I can think of where a defendant facing very serious charges was released to fly off on a private jet to a country without an extradition

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treaty," she says, questioning whether Snipes—who at press time was scheduled to be back in the states on January 10 for pretrial hearings—would actually return.

But federal charges aren't the half of it. In the past few years, Snipes has stumbled into a host of other legal entanglements. In 2002, he was sued by a former prostitute who claimed he'd fathered her child (the case was dropped when the actual father was identified). The following year, Chase Manhattan seized his sprawling \$1.7 million home in a gated Orlando community and sold it at auction to recoup unpaid debts totaling \$700,000. Around the same time, the state of California issued a lien against him for \$67,000 in overdue taxes. Then, last July, powerhouse Hollywood agency UTA, which has represented the actor since 2002, sued to recover \$1.5 million in fees it claims he owes.

Of course, Snipes isn't the first performer to mishandle his fortune. But records obtained by Radar paint a troubling portrait of an actor who appears to have associated himself with not one but two radical extremist groups, each with a long history of criminal activity. In addition to being advised by Eddie Ray Kahn (pronounced "Kane"), an IRS antagonist since 2000, Snipes appears to own a fraudulent trust of the sort that recently earned anti-tax activist Arthur Farnsworth a conviction for tax evasion (he is scheduled to be sentenced in Pennsylvania later this month). It's not the best company to be keeping if one seeks to maintain good standing with the U.S. government.

But what makes the case truly bizarre is the anti-tax movement's deep association with anti-Semites and white supremacists. According to Heidi Beirich, deputy director of the Intelligence Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center—an organization that monitors hate groups and has been tracking tax protestors since the mid-90s—the movement has long been a magnet for bigots. "The whole idea goes back to the Posse Comitatus, a racist anti-government sect that flourished during the farm crisis of the '80s," she says, adding that anti-tax activism was later embraced by the Patriot movement and armed

militias that bubbled up during the Clinton years. David Cay Johnston, who has covered the subject for the New York Times, adds that the traditional spouters of anti-tax rhetoric have been angry white males. "Typically they have encountered some huge failure in their lives for which they blame the government," he says, adding, "Almost everyone involved is white."

Tellingly, after Snipes turned himself in to authorities, it didn't take long for his anti-tax brotherhood to disavow him. "[Snipes] is Black and can not claim any part of the constitution for their rights," opined one poster on a prominent protestor message board devoted to the issue, adding that, as a black man, Snipes was obliged to pay taxes. "Constitutions pertain 'ONLY' for white Europeans and nobody else."

Further complicating matters are his reported ties to a bizarre Georgia-based black nationalist cult, the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors—an apocalyptic organization that preaches a ripped-from-the-X Files mélange of UFO lore, Egyptian mythology, Afrocentrism, and conspiracy theory. The group is led by self-styled prophet Dwight "Malachi" York, who in 2004 was sentenced to 135 years in prison for a litany of convictions including tax evasion and the sexual abuse of more than a dozen children of his disciples.

Joining his client at the courthouse to address the media, Snipes's lawyer, Billy Martin, limited his remarks to the tax charges and took no questions. Martin, a partner at the influential law firm Blank Rome, is an expert litigator and master spinner who successfully defended NBA forward Jayson Williams in the killing of a hired limo driver, and represented the family of Chandra Levy. He told the press that his client had been victimized by "unscrupulous" advisers and vowed that a trial would vindicate him.

To even veteran Hollywood observers, Snipes's behavior is mystifying. How did the Bronx-raised black actor get mixed up in a movement that preaches anti-government paranoia and outright racism? Snipes's representatives declined repeated requests for comment, and

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several of his high-profile friends (including Rosie Perez, John Leguizamo, and Spike Lee) also refused to speak about the matter. But Snipes's unusual life story-and a grandiose self-image he has cultivated since childhood-may hold some clues to his plight. After rocketing from poverty to become one of the industry's top black leading men, Snipes has often found himself drawn to a variety of what his longtime friend screenwriter Barry Michael Cooper calls "Yes-people, whether they are in politics, religion, or New Age theory."

The firstborn in a large family (he tersely told one reporter that he had "eight or so" siblings), Snipes seems to have always thought of his life in mythological terms-worlds apart from the South Bronx, where his mother pieced together a living as a teacher's assistant. "I think of myself as a young prince from a long line of royalty," Snipes boasted to *People* in 1991. "My sign is Leo. A Leo has to walk with pride. When he takes a step, he has to put his foot down. You walk into a room and you want people to know your presence, without you doing anything. I think I have kind of a natural magnetism." His talent was apparent early on, and his mother sent him to New York's well-regarded High School of Performing Arts, but Snipes was also drawn to the streets of the South Bronx. "Wes had one foot in the world of Juilliard and another on Southern Boulevard," says Cooper, who cowrote *New Jack City*.

In the early 1980s, Snipes won a Victor Borge scholarship to the mostly white State University of New York at Purchase, where he "felt like mold on white bread," as he told *Ebony*. After graduating in 1985, Snipes married his first wife, April, and converted to Islam. He then moved to Manhattan and began his acting career with a minor role in the 1986 Goldie Hawn vehicle *Wildcats*. His big break came in 1987, when he won a part in Michael Jackson's video for "Bad."

Directed by Martin Scorsese, "Bad" has a cartoon thuggishness that must have seemed ridiculous to someone with Snipes's background. But when Cooper spotted the actor on MTV, he was convinced he'd found the lead for *New Jack*

City. "I said, 'That's Nino Brown,'" he recalls. "I was sure that he was actually from the streets." Though the suits at Warner Bros. were dubious, Cooper threatened to remove his name from the credits if Snipes wasn't cast. After beating out Denzel Washington and Forest Whitaker, Snipes meticulously prepared for the role by researching the life of Washington, D.C., crack kingpin Rayful Edmund, and in a strange but inspired move, cut his hair into an angular, upward spike to resemble, as Snipes told Cooper, "the spine of a black panther."

Produced on a budget of \$8 million, the film was a runaway success, earning \$50 million at the box office. Sixteen years after its release, it remains so iconic in the hip-hop world that rappers from Def Jam's Juelz Santana to Diddy's Atlanta protégé Yung Joc reference it in their rhymes. "Wes was the paradigm," Cooper says. "Guys like Jay-Z model their swagger after him." Savvy about the perils of typecasting, Snipes wisely plunged into a slew of less predictable roles, playing an architect who falls for a white coworker in 1991's *Jungle Fever*, a savvy street hustler in 1992's *White Men Can't Jump*, and a drag queen in *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything!* Julie Newmar in 1995.

By then, he had become one of Hollywood's most bankable male stars, and a regular tabloid staple. As his face began popping up on magazine covers from *Ebony* to *Newsweek*, his asking price rose to \$7 million per film, putting him neck and neck with Denzel Washington for the title of Hollywood's leading black actor. But all the adulation was starting to take a personal toll. After divorcing his wife April, who won custody of their young son, Jelani, and breaking with Islam-which he described as a temporary lifeline that had served its purpose-he seemed increasingly detached from reality. He began traveling with a menacing 15-person posse he later named the Royal Guard of Amen-Ra, after the Egyptian air deity and king of the gods. Some of his old friends were alienated by his increasingly high-handed behavior. Cooper remembers running into Snipes and his entourage one night at New York City's Coffee Shop on Union Square. "At that point, fame had

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really affected him," Cooper says. "His attitude was: 'I'm a star and I can't be touched.'"

The stunning success of the Blade movies—a sci-fi trilogy in which Snipes plays a half-human-half-vampire vampire slayer—further inflated the actor's ballooning ego. The first Blade sequel performed so well that UTA, which had signed Snipes in 2002, brokered a \$13 million payout for his part in the film's third installment, Blade: Trinity. Though it was the largest fee Snipes had ever commanded, the actor seemed less than appreciative. According to UTA attorney Bryan Freedman, Snipes paid only half of the agreed-upon 10 percent commission for that film, and stiffed the agency of its cut outright on subsequent films, including *Middle Man* and *The Shooter*, which jointly earned the actor another \$9 million. Snipes has never responded to the UTA suit, Freedman adds. Instead, in the spring of 2006, he left the agency and has yet to engage a replacement.

Somewhere along the line, Snipes seems to have become involved with the Nuwaubians, then headquartered in Putnam County, Georgia, though the exact nature of his relationship with this group is unclear. In 2000, a Nuwaubian representative told the *Macon Telegraph* that Snipes was an "avid" member, and the cult boasted of its relationship with Snipes on its website. Noting that the star "is a proud Nubian/Nuwaubian," the site added, rather portentously, "He is moving to Putnam County, and with him comes more money and power. All Nuwaubians will join his elite force for training. We will stop at nothing to drive the evil out of Putnam County."

At the time, the actor's representative denied that Snipes was "even remotely" affiliated with the sect, but his attempt in May 2000 to purchase 257 acres adjacent to the Nuwaubian compound for use as a training camp certainly raised eyebrows. Snipes sent his brother—whose name, oddly, is Wesley Rudolph Snipes—along with martial arts expert Steve Muhammad to Georgia to represent him in the deal. The pair approached police and zoning board officials and announced that they wanted to open a training camp for the

Royal Guard of Amen-Ra. "They came to my office and said that they intended to turn the property into some kind of military training ground," remembers Putnam County sheriff Howard Sills, "but the last thing I needed was a damn school for mercenaries right next to the Nuwaubians."

Meanwhile, an Internet job posting said the Royal Guard had 200 openings for "an elite team of highly trained men and women who will provide the following services: Inter-national and domestic risk management; intelligence and protective operations; VIP/executive protection to dignitaries and celebrities; special event security; counter-surveillance and counter-terrorist measures."

Sills grew even more alarmed after an application Snipes's representatives sent to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms requesting the right to utilize weapons on the property turned out to contain false information (claiming, for instance, that the group already owned the property). Though Snipes offered to pay several times the market value for the parcel, the sale was eventually nixed by the local zoning board after Sills testified against it. The sheriff remains convinced that Snipes's determination to buy the land was related to the Nuwaubians. "If all he wanted to do was buy a piece of property," Sills says, "he could have gone to another county and gotten a similar property for one-tenth of the price."

How Snipes first got involved with the criminal cult remains a source of puzzlement. The group was started in the late 1960s in Brooklyn, where York—a prophet, spiritualist, and according to the group's website, "author of over 350 books" on subjects ranging from Egyptian architecture to alien abduction—lectured to a small band of followers, preaching, among other things, that the world would soon end; that the devil cast a spell thousands of years ago to keep black people spiritually ignorant; that York is an extraterrestrial from the planet Rizq; and that malevolent aliens walk among us, poisoning our minds via pop culture. Despite York's more outlandish claims, however, some of his

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teachings appear to have struck a chord with black nationalists-including rap pioneer Afrika Bambaataa and hip-hop artists such as Mobb Deep's Prodigy and MF Doom-eager to assert links to the ancient Egyptians. This aspect of York's teachings may have caught Snipes's eye as well.

In 1993, with money donated by hundreds of followers, York relocated the group to a 476-acre property in Putnam County, where he built the village of Tama-Re, a sprawling Egyptian-themed complex of pyramids, obelisks, and statues of Egyptian gods, which he declared a sovereign nation. Unsurprisingly, the compound, also known as the Egypt of the West, ran afoul of local building codes, bringing constant battles with local law enforcement. "The first major altercation occurred when building inspectors showed up and were met by armed individuals who refused to allow them onto the property," Sills recalls. "Another time I went out there and two armed guards stood in front of my vehicle and would not move. I believe that Mr. York wanted a Waco situation."

Possibly, it was through the Nuwaubians that Snipes found his way into the radical tax protestor movement. The cult issued millions in false bills of exchange to the IRS, a technique pioneered by the Montana Freemen, a white supremacist Christian Patriot group whose 1996 standoff with federal agents in Montana led to the longest federal siege in modern U.S. history. Surprisingly, given their racial and political differences, the Freeman and the Nuwaubians found common cause in a shared dislike for government and a penchant for conspiracy theories.

Tax expert J.J. MacNab claims that in 1999, four members of the Freemen traveled to Georgia to teach the Nuwaubians how to process phony bills of exchange (often checks falsely drawn from the U.S. Treasury). Sills, the Putnam County sheriff, confirms interaction between the two radical groups. He says that while visiting the compound in 1999, he met a high-level Freeman named Everett Leon Stout, who was notorious for issuing phony warrants for the

arrest of law enforcement officers and eventually issued one for the arrest of Sills himself. In 2002, Stout was indicted for fraud, and in 2004 York was sentenced to more than 100 years in prison for rape and child abuse. His followers remain devoted, however. In November, a handful of deputies in Clarke County, Georgia, sympathetic to the Nuwaubian cause, were fired for giving imprisoned members of the group preferential treatment, and the theme of the 11th annual Nuwaubian Ball, held at Atlanta's Fox Theater on December 29, 2006, was "The Noble and Illustrious Rev. Dr. Malachi Z. York is Innocent!"

It's not hard to see why the anti-tax gospel might have appealed to Snipes, whose seven-figure payday on *Blade II* would have entitled Uncle Sam to about a one-third cut. Looking to avoid the massive bill, he somehow hooked up with Kahn, whom the actor's lawyer now blames for Snipes's predicament. The folksy 63-year-old accountant was a far cry from the high-powered moneymen who usually oversee the finances of Hollywood's A-list. Kahn operated his practice, American Rights Litigators, from an office above a Victorian costume shop in Mount Dora, Florida, with his wife, Kathleen "Kookie" Kahn. Kahn was a passionate advocate of the so-called 861 Argument, which maintains that Americans may be taxed only on wages earned from a foreign company. Though this fanciful interpretation is frequently cited by radical tax protestors, the IRS has always dismissed their assertion as fraud. Courts have invariably agreed. "The batting average of tax protestors in the courtroom is .000," says New York Times reporter David Cay Johnston. "Every court that has heard the arguments of the tax protestors has rejected them as nonsense."

Ominously for Snipes, prosecutors have won serious jail time for defendants in a number of recent cases. "The government has gotten very serious with these people," observes Heidi Beirich of the Southern Poverty Law Center. "Snipes hasn't paid taxes in years, and I think there's a pretty good chance he'll do time. They sent Richard Hatch to jail, right?"

If the case does end up in court, as seems increasingly likely, Billy Martin's contention that Snipes was an unwitting victim of unscrupulous advisers will be difficult to maintain. The actor didn't help matters when he sent an Orlando Sentinel reporter an impassioned e-mail in which he pointed out that "being a black male that asks questions doesn't help the situation." Calling himself an "artist and scholar seeking truth through diligent study and spiritual practice," he added, "Perhaps people like that have now become the enemy of the State." He also took the opportunity to direct the reader to several popular tax protestor websites.

Even more telling was the strange notation that Snipes scrawled on the Conditions of Release form he signed: "All rights reserved without prejudice." Among their other arcane legalistic beliefs, radical tax protestors maintain that including the words without prejudice is an indication that a contract was signed under duress. Whether Snipes intended to signal that he considered the contract invalid is another question that may be answered in court.

If he does end up before a jury, Snipes can always rely on his famous leonine charisma, which, judging from his appearance in Ocala, remains very much in effect. Working in his favor will be the still bewildering notion of a famously Afrocentric star getting mixed up with the radical right. As one tax protestor recently noted on a movement message board, "There is no jury ... in the world that will ever believe that Wesley Snipes made friends with and conspired with a known white supremacist to willfully fail to file his taxes."

Deputy reinstated after being fired for ties to Nuwaubians

The Associated Press/April 18, 2007

Athens, Georgia -- A deputy who had been fired because of ties to the Nuwaubian religious sect has been allowed to return to work after a personnel hearing officer overturned the sheriff's decision to fire him.

Deputy Bobby Dixon returned to his job at the Clarke County Jail last week, officials said.

Dixon was one of four deputies who were fired in November after an investigation found they violated jail policies and conduct codes through on-the-job activities connected with the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

The Southern Poverty Law Center classifies the Nuwaubians as a black hate group. The leader of the group, Dwight "Malachi" York, is serving a 135-year federal prison sentence after being convicted in 2004 of racketeering, money laundering and having sex with the children of his followers.

The fired deputies were accused of recruiting jail inmates into the religious sect and urging prisoners to rebel against white deputies.

Dixon successfully appealed to be reinstated during a March 5 hearing before Athens-Clarke County Personnel Hearing Officer Denny Galis.

The sheriff's office fired Dixon because he failed to remove a sign from an inmate's cell that had to do with the inmate's Nuwaubian beliefs. Galis ruled that a superior officer could have taken action against Dixon but did not.

Galis ruled March 23 that although Dixon violated two jail policies, he should be disciplined, not fired.

County Human Resources Director Harry Owens said Dixon served a 10-day suspension without pay and was allowed to return to work last week.

Despite reinstating Dixon, Galis upheld the decision to fire two other deputies.

Galis upheld one deputy's termination, finding that William York tried to manipulate a polygraph test and could not be reached while on paid administrative leave.

The hearing officer also upheld the firing of Anthony Montgomery, saying he flagrantly disregarded jail policy by writing to Dwight York.

A fourth former deputy has an appeal hearing scheduled for June 12.

New Book Asks Provocative Questions About Dwight York

**The Macon Telegraph/May 20, 2007
By Joe Kovac Jr.**

In July 1999, Time magazine ran a 635-word item about an influx of black strangers who had descended on a plot of rural Georgia farmland, built "40-ft. pyramids, obelisks, gods, goddesses and a giant sphinx," and, in the process, drummed up quite a stir.

"Space Invaders," read the headline of a piece that noted the cosmic-gone-country leanings of a religious-slash-"fraternal" group. These ostracism-claiming outsiders had dubbed themselves Nuwaubians.

Of course, locals had long known of them by the summer the national magazine blurb came out. They were "the pyramid people," ones who, according to some of them, were followers of a leader who'd come to earth from another planet and settled, of all places, in Putnam County.

The tone of that breezy write-up in Time nearly eight years ago — and its understandably limited perception of what was truly transpiring in the pyramid pasture — persists even to this day. Even after the horrors that took place there have come to light.

The man from planet Rizq, or, as Dwight D. York is now known, inmate No. 17911-054 at the supermax federal prison in Florence, Colo., was such a master manipulator that his most despicable acts are sometimes glossed over in memory.

We tend to remember the pyramids, then the perversion and only then the imprisonment. And it hasn't been that long. If you ask, most folks don't know how many years York was sentenced to serve in prison. Or that he is now living under the same roof as Terry Nichols, Eric Robert Rudolph, Zacarias Moussaoui and Theodore Kaczynski. Or that he was sent there for 135 years for molesting 14 boys and girls as well as for racketeering.

Or, necessarily, that he was, as author Bill Osinski's new book refers to York, the target of "the largest child molestation prosecution ... ever directed at a single suspect."

In "Ungodly: A True Story of Unprecedented Evil," Osinski probes York's diabolical underbelly, one that for the longest time too many overlooked. We laughed at York's spaceship hooley and flea-market architecture. York and his cult were akin to the image of those who hawk pamphlets at urban traffic-light intersections. For an instant, we often wonder "what's their deal?" before rolling by.

Though York and his followers often claimed they were not a religious sect, it was freedom of

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religion, which Osinski duly notes, that in some ways afforded York *carte blanche*.

Osinski, who covered the Nuwaubian saga for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and came to know many of its key players, chronicles York's early days as a pimpish New York hustler who deifies himself to reap riches under the guise of religion and communal purity.

As a GBI administrator, in hindsight, tells Osinski, "When someone wraps themselves in the cloak of religion, law enforcement can sometimes become cautious."

"What (York) came up with," Osinski writes, "was called the United Nation of Nuwaubian Moors, a concept composed of an extra-large dose of Egyptian schlock, served with a side dish of intergalactic mumbo jumbo."

Osinski writes that his book is, in part, "a story about how our society deals with, or fails to deal with, issues of race and religion."

It is also about what happens when we look the other way, how York made us do that, and, further, how he fooled his followers into turning over their lives and their children "to the whims of a demented character."

Osinski writes that York "was the director and star of his own blue movie of a life, except that, unlike most garden-variety porn, his performers were children essentially powerless to refuse his casting calls."

Osinski explains that York's philosophies "found a receptive audience among those who had good reason to believe they'd been shut out economically from access to the American Dream."

The author relates how, in essence, York's beleaguered devotees, a core group of African-Americans — the tired, the poor, the everyday adherents yearning to breathe free — were, under York's wing, exhausted, starved, culturally asphyxiated and granted increasingly

squalid living quarters in a compound built on their own backs.

"All (York) wanted from the people who bought his books and tapes," Osinski writes, "was their unquestioned loyalty, their free labor, sexual submission, and all their money."

So why did so many buy what York was selling?

Osinski explores several possible answers. And he is careful to point out that York's followers were often anything but "misguided dupes."

"As tawdry as the reality was," Osinski writes, "many of the Nuwaubians sincerely believed that they were part of something noble, that they were building something good."

Interviews with those who worked closely with York, some of the most revealing parts of the book, shed light on the psychological hold York had over some of his followers. One says, "York made evil seem fair." Another Nuwaubian, though disillusioned, admits still having a fondness for York "even though I know it was all fake."

York's grip was similar to the gravitational pull of an abusive marriage. Once you've chosen to share your life with someone, as aberrant and abrasive as their behavior may be, getting away may not be so easy.

Bob Moser of the Southern Poverty Law Center tells Osinski, "Once you accept Dwight York is special, then you automatically have to subordinate yourself to that authority."

Moser calls York's cult "definitely a black supremacist group," and he says race was another factor that kept followers flowing in. And their allegations of harassment by predominantly white law enforcers assured them a place in the all-important publicity-stirring spotlight. (Howard Sills, the Putnam sheriff who is among the book's heroes, says that in reality "the only racial issue was that every victim York preyed upon was black.")

While not one of those sweep-you-away narratives, the book does what most newspapers stories fail to do. It condenses a complex swirl of decades worth of events and accusations — ones prosecutors actually worried were “too bizarre to be believed” — and presents them beginning to end.

In doing so, Osinski fashions a definitive documentary.

He is critical of the Georgia press, this paper included, for playing the early “Nuwaubian story” as if it were “a rural Georgia sideshow.” The author contends that there wasn’t much digging into York’s background or what was really going on at his make-believe Egypt outside Eatonton.

Osinski also delves into how some high-ranking officials in state government may well have played roles in catering to York, thus hindering authorities who might have brought York’s transgressions to light years sooner.

The book notes, too, how the Nuwaubian shtick drew high-profile black leaders — the Revs. Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton among them — to hear claims of perceived racial injustice. Macon Mayor Jack Ellis even had his picture taken, with Jackson, at York’s property in 2001.

In an interview with York’s son, Malik, the author gets to the heart of what turns out to have been a scam perpetrated by a heartless soul. Malik York says his father once told him, “I don’t believe any of this (expletive.) If I had to dress up like a nun, if I had to be a Jew, I’d do it for this kind of money.”

As York is said to have told someone close to him, “It’s all about the packaging.”

The man was so “out there,” at least to the casual observer, that his weirdness somehow still reigns. So much so that even in hindsight it is hard to grasp the nefariousness he wrought.

Maybe, in the end, it was whack-job discountability that York sought, a smokescreen behind which to run his game.

Perhaps it was York’s persona, clownish and hokey to the hilt — scoffed at and written off as cuckoo by the masses — that greased the way for him to soil the innocence of so many.

Osinski adroitly quotes Flannery O’Connor, who once wrote, “Whenever I’m asked why Southerner writers particularly have a penchant for writing about freaks, I say it is because we are still able to recognize one.”

But are we?

Jailer now must wait to appeal her firing

**Athens Banner-Herald,
Georgia/June 13, 2007
By Joe Johnson**

One of four Clarke County Sheriff’s Office jailers fired in November because their alleged black-supremacist activities undermined jail security will have to wait until later this summer to see if she can win back her job.

Rena Jennings was scheduled to make her case before a county personnel hearing officer Tuesday, but the hearing was postponed because the hearing officer wasn’t available, according to the Athens-Clarke Department of Human Resources.

The hearing hadn’t been rescheduled, and the earliest it likely will be held would be sometime in August, a department spokeswoman said.

Jennings is a purported member of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a sect headed by Dwight “Malachi” York, who is serving a 135-

year federal prison sentence after a jury convicted him in 2004 of racketeering, money laundering, and multiple child molestation charges.

The Southern Poverty Law Center classifies the Nuwaubians as a "black separatist" hate group.

York had a mansion in Athens and his followers lived in a sprawling compound in Eatonton where, according to the law center, "York told his followers they were building a sovereign nation where they would be free from the influence of white 'devils.' "

York sexually molested children of his followers both in Athens and at the Putnam County compound, federal prosecutors said.

Sheriff's officials identified five deputies as York's followers, and after an investigation determined the deputies threatened jail security because, among other things, they urged black inmates to rebel against white deputies.

The Nuwaubian deputies also allegedly recruited inmates into the cult, and one wrote to York at the maximum-security prison in Colorado prison where York is housed, telling the cult leader he was "fighting" for York's freedom.

One of the deputies was allowed to resign, but four were fired. Three deputies already have appealed, and Personnel Hearing Officer Denny Galis upheld two of the firings.

He ordered the sheriff's office to reinstate Deputy Bobby Dixon - who Galis said deserved discipline but not termination for violating jail policies.

Dixon returned to work at the jail in April.

Nuwaubians Protest in Macon

WMGT-TV, Georgia/June 14, 2007
By Heather Graf

On Thursday, members of the religious group, the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors held a demonstration at Macon City Hall.

On their agenda, two issues: to protest their leader, Malachi York's imprisonment, and the firing of four of their members from the Clark County Jail in Athens.

One member says they chose to demonstrate in Macon because it's where York's trial began.

"We need to get the story out so that other people can realize what is happening to us as Nuwaubians could happen to them as well." - William York, Nuwaubian Nation

Malachi York is currently serving a life sentence in prison, for molesting 14 boys and girls whose parents were members of the Nuwabian group.

More than 20 people attended today's protest, which comes on very the same day that an Atlanta author unveiled a new book, he says tells the true story of Malachi York and the Nuwaubian people.

Bill Osinski held a book signing at the Barnes & Noble on Tom Hill Senior Boulevard.

Bibb County Sheriff's deputies were on-hand, just in case members of the Nuwaubian group showed up.

They did not make an appearance at the store, but Osinki had this to say, about their protest at city hall.

"At some point, they've got to get beyond their delusions. This man has been convicted of perhaps the worst child molestation case in

United States history, and you know, to defend him at this point is unconscionable." - Bill Osinski, Author

Osinski's book, "Ungodly," hit bookstore shelves today.

The author, who is also an investigative reporter for the Atlanta Journal Constitution, began researching the Nuwaubian group more than nine years ago.

Book Focuses on Malachi York

13WMAZ TV News, Georgia/June 15, 2007

By Rich Hardwick

A controversial book hit stores Thursday.

Author Bill Osinski released his book at Barnes and Noble.

The book titled "Ungodly" is billed as the real story of Dr. Malachi Z. York, also known as Imam Isa.

Malachi was convicted of more than 200 counts of child molestation.

According to author Osinski, Malachi's case became the largest child molestation prosecution in United States history in terms of numbers of victims and potential numbers of crimes ever directed at a single person.

Bill Osinski, author:

"He found another isolated property down here in Georgia that he brought his special followers to and selected the girls out, he got

the older girls that he abused to train the younger children and it was a generational thing through cycles of young people he abused."

Osinski is donating half of all book proceeds to the assistance of York's victims.

Fired jailer sues sheriff: Probe of cult influence at issue

Athens Banner-Herald, Georgia/June 22, 2007
By Joe Johnson

A former Clarke County jailer will ask a jury to decide his claim that Sheriff Ira Edwards fired him because he is white, Christian and launched an investigation into a racist cult whose criminal leader met with the sheriff and donated money to his political campaign.

Brett Hart alleges that Edwards "subscribes" to the black supremacist beliefs of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, and hired Nuwaubian deputies in return for a large campaign contribution the group made when Edwards first ran for sheriff in 2000, according to a lawsuit filed Thursday in U.S. District Court.

"This contribution was made ... as part of the Nuwaubian effort to ensure the placement of Nuwaubian members or supporters in the Clarke County Sheriff's Office and the propagation of Nuwaubian beliefs and tenets among the staff and inmates under (Edward's) control," the lawsuit claims.

As chief jailer, he consistently received favorable job performance reviews, Hart claims in the lawsuit, but that quickly changed after he

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began investigating Nuwaubian activities at the jail.

Edwards told Hart in April 2006 he was fired as part of a "change in management of jail operations" following a review of "the totality of jail operations," the lawsuit states. But, the lawsuit alleges, a 2004 Georgia Sheriff's Association report praised the local lock-up as "one of the best managed jails in the state."

Edwards wouldn't immediately dispute any of Hart's allegations, releasing a statement that said, "The Clarke County Sheriff's Office does not wish to comment on pending litigation."

Hart is seeking an unspecified amount in damages, claiming that when Edwards fired him, the sheriff violated Hart's constitutional rights as well as the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The sheriff's office and county government are named as co-defendants in the civil action.

In addition to lost pay, the lawsuit seeks "punitive damages to be determined by the enlightened conscience of the jury to deter (the) defendants and others from similar misconduct in the future."

The lawsuit hints at evidence of Edwards' support of the Nuwaubians, branded as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

The complaint alleges that Edwards made trips to the group's Egyptian-themed 146-acre compound in Eatonton, called "Tama-Re," where he met with the sect's leader, Dwight "Malachi" York, before and after his election in 2000. Edwards "knew or suspected" at the time that York was a felon, having been convicted in New York of statutory rape, resisting arrest and weapons possession, the lawsuit states.

The lawsuit even mentions a set of pyramid-shaped paper weights on Edward's desk in his office at the Clarke County Courthouse, saying that "pyramids are commonly known Nuwaubian paraphernalia."

In return for the \$2,000 campaign contribution made by "Z. York," one of the Nuwaubian leader's many aliases, the lawsuit alleges, Edwards hired at least six known Nuwaubians, knowing that five of them had resigned from the Macon Police Department out of allegiance to York, now serving a 135-year federal prison sentence.

The deputies quit their jobs in Macon in 2004 after the city's mayor refused to publicly support York while the Nuwaubian leader was prosecuted in federal court on charges of racketeering, money laundering and child molestation.

Prosecutors said York sexually assaulted his followers' children, some as young as 8 years old, both at the Nuwaubian's Putnam County compound and at a mansion York owned off Timothy Road in Athens, prosecutors said.

York still commands fierce loyalty while behind bars, the lawsuit says, and non-Nuwaubian deputies feared that sect members wouldn't come to their aid if trouble broke out at the jail.

"Although York is imprisoned and Tama-Re destroyed, the Nuwaubian Nation remains an intact organization," the lawsuit says. "Its members adhere to York's teachings, including the superiority of the Nuwaubian faith and the inferiority of non-African American races."

Hart alleges that his employer turned on him after he began investigating deputies for distributing Nuwaubian literature, recruiting prisoners and writing to York in prison, which the lawsuit claims violated jail policy, as well as state and federal law.

Soon after the investigation began, Edwards refused Hart's request to sign a verification of employment Hart needed to maintain standing with the American Jail Association as a certified jail manager. Edwards had signed an earlier employment verification "without hesitation," the lawsuit says.

"Edwards terminated Hart because he is white and (participated) in the internal investigation of the Nuwaubian deputies' letters to York that threatened the Nuwaubians' efforts to infiltrate the Athens-Clarke County Sheriff's Office," the lawsuit states.

The internal investigation Hart initiated found no policy violations, Edwards said at the time. But two months later, the sheriff's office launched a second internal probe in the wake of "intense scrutiny" by the media and a Clarke County grand jury into the circumstances surrounding Hart's firing, the lawsuit says.

But Edwards and other county officials later revised that report, removing as many as 40 pages, and ordering the deputy who led the investigation to destroy all copies of his original report.

After the second internal investigation, which concluded that deputies' Nuwaubian activities had compromised security at the jail, Edwards fired four Nuwaubian deputies and allowed a fifth to resign.

Before he filed suit, Hart lodged a complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, alleging he was a victim of reverse-discrimination.

The lawsuit says Hart was initially replaced as jail commander by a sheriff's captain who is black and also subscribes to Nuwaubian beliefs, but Edwards later filled the post with a white employee with no jail experience "to shield himself" from Hart's EEOC complaint.

Cult leader duped politicians

Book on "Malachi" York and his crimes against children details what

prosecutor calls his "most significant" case

**Daily Report online/July 27, 2007
By R. Robin McDonald**

Dwight "Malachi" York was a false prophet, a psychotic thug, a con man extraordinaire and a sexual predator who headquartered his religious cult in rural Georgia, then used his position as a religious leader to deflect scrutiny from his criminal activities, a newly published book asserts.

York's brazen willingness to attack his skeptics as racist, while portraying himself as a victim of racial and religious persecution, enabled him to con politicians, law enforcement authorities, civil rights organizations, academics and journalists, according to Bill Osinski, the author of "Ungodly: A True Story of Unprecedented Evil." "Among the dupes," Osinski writes, "were a mayor of New York and a governor of Georgia."

"Ungodly" is the story of York's rise and fall and the sordid secret behind York's professed dreams to build a black Utopia in Putnam County, Georgia and take global a new religion with him as its self-styled savior. Inside Tama-Re, the faux Egyptian compound he had built on a 440-acre farm in Putnam County, York turned his female followers into concubines and their children into sex slaves.

Today, the man who set himself up as The Master Teacher of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors and the Pharaoh of Tama-Re is in federal prison, serving a 135-year term for racketeering and transporting minors in interstate commerce for unlawful sexual activity.

York's appeals have failed but his followers still maintain his innocence on a Web site, www.hesinnocent.com.

F. Maxwell Wood, U.S. attorney for Georgia's middle district, called his office's prosecution of

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York "without a doubt the most significant and powerful case I ever prosecuted."

In an interview with the Daily Report, Wood said that York's cult and the criminal activities that it engendered "was an incredible instance of an individual manipulating large numbers of people. ... The evidence was overwhelming."

Wood said Howard Sills, the Putnam County sheriff who initiated the investigation of York and the Nuwaubians, "is one of the best sheriffs in this state. I think he showed a great deal of patience with that situation."

Osinski's book explains why Sills needed patience and perseverance. For more than three decades—first in New York City and, eventually, in Georgia—York flaunted authorities, declared Tama-Re and the Nuwaubian sect to be a sovereign nation not subject to federal, state or local laws. When challenged, York engaged in vicious "smear campaigns" against his detractors, Osinski writes.

But York's adeptness at recruiting high-profile political allies and the utter control he exercised over his acolytes masked what Osinski bluntly calls the underlying evil at the heart of York's growing empire whose followers worshipped him as both a savior and an alien god.

For nearly a decade, Osinski—a former staff writer with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution—pursued the story of York. In his preface, Osinski writes that the York case illuminates the political and social conditions "that allowed a monster to operate with virtual impunity for more than three decades."

In chronicling that story, Osinski interviewed dozens of former Nuwaubians, including York's own son, Malik, and many of York's victims. "That means delving into the ugly depths of what happened to the children," Osinski writes.

"There is simply no way to soften the harsh reality that Dwight York repeatedly raped dozens of children, some of them on a daily

basis, and some of those assaults continued over a period of years," he writes.

"Some of the girls who were adolescents when he started to molest them grew up to be women who bore him children; and, in a few cases, they groomed younger children to be receptive to be his next generation of victims. In some cases, the adult concubines participated in the sex crimes."

It was one of those victims who first told her story to Osinski, who later became a witness in the child molestation investigation of York by Sills and the FBI.

Because some of York's victims remain traumatized, afraid, or ashamed, Osinski has made a commitment to donate half of any royalties he receives from the sale of "Ungodly" to a fund to aid the victims—who he calls "the lambs who brought down the wolf."

At a recent lecture at the Margaret Mitchell House, Osinski said that reporting on York and the Nuwaubians "was a difficult story from day one."

Editors at the AJC and other papers around the state "were never enthused about the story," Osinski said, while local authorities—Sills, foremost among them—came under political attack whenever they raised questions about the man they privately referred to as "the black David Koresh."

Osinski writes that for years state and federal agents feared that York was spoiling for a violent confrontation with authorities much like the 1993 stand-off in Waco, Texas, that eventually destroyed the Branch Davidians, a remarkably similar, but far smaller, cult headed by Koresh.

Sills, who joined Osinski at the lecture, said he started investigating York in September 1998 after receiving reports from local medical professionals that a large number of York's female followers were pregnant—and that some of them were terribly young. By then, Sills said

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he was aware of a secret FBI report documenting York's activities in New York that linked him or his followers to illegal gun purchases, suspected firebombings, assaults, bank robberies, extortion and an unsolved murder.

In response to the investigations, the Nuwaubians asserted continually that, as citizens of a separate sovereign nation, they were outside the law. This defiance provoked angry confrontations with county officials over liquor licenses, building permits, fire safety standards and zoning. Nuwaubians, encouraged by York, threatened county inspectors even as they barred them from the expanding, motley collection of plastic stucco temples and pyramids they had built, Sills said.

Sills said the local battles over county ordinances were among York's attempts to provoke an armed confrontation with law enforcement authorities and so gain sympathy for the cult, Sills said. "York wanted to offer up some of his people in an armed conflict with us," he asserted.

But the sheriff said that when he approached the GBI, the FBI and, eventually, then-Georgia Gov. Roy Barnes for help, he found little in the way of support. As the investigation grew, Sills said "The hardest thing I had to deal with were the politicians who didn't want to believe what was going on in this case. ... Political correctness and playing the race card, you don't know how powerful that is."

Said Osinski: "What happened here in Georgia was the continuation of a pattern well-established in New York that authorities left this guy alone. It happened here. It happened up there. By acting so as not to be perceived as racist or intolerant of religion, they enabled this guy to enjoy a long life of crime."

State Rep. Tyrone Brooks, D-Atlanta, a longtime civil rights activist, was one of York's supporters.

Brooks said this week that he was first invited to York's compound by Joe Beasley, Southeast Region director of Jesse Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH Coalition. Beasley told Brooks he had received reports that Sills was subjecting the Nuwaubians to profiling "based on appearances, based on their looks," Brooks recalled in an interview with the Daily Report.

Brooks said that when he, Beasley and other leaders of Georgia's civil rights community met with Sills, he urged the sheriff and his deputies "to be very careful about their conduct" with regard to the Nuwaubians. Brooks said he also took issue with Sills' involvement as an enforcer of county zoning violations at York's compound.

"We were concerned that the Nuwaubians were being mistreated and harassed because of the way they looked," Brooks explained. "They were being perceived as a religious cult."

Brooks said he always objected to the "cult" designation, one that—according to "Ungodly"—York himself had embraced. Brooks, a Baptist, said that he was always taught, "You've got to have tolerance of other religions that you may not even understand"—a principle that was strengthened by his work with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Over the course of four years, Brooks visited York's compound several times—often with members of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials, and once with Jesse Jackson. Brooks said he always experienced "good fellowship, good food, a very wonderful experience," at Tama-Re. "We didn't see any alcohol. We didn't see any tobacco products. We didn't hear any profanity. ... There was never anything to indicate there was anything wrong. No one said anything about children being mistreated. Nothing ever came up."

Brooks said that Sills intimated, during one of their meetings, that there was "another angle to the investigation" of the Nuwaubians that the sheriff declined to share with Brooks. But he never confided that he suspected York was molesting children, the legislator said.

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Brooks said that, while he had heard rumors that York might be stockpiling guns—a charge that York denied—if he had been told of allegations that York was molesting children, he would have confronted York. "There's no way I would ever condone harming children," he said.

"I have a pretty good knack for knowing when people are telling me the truth. ... There's always two sides to a story, then the truth is in the middle. Just because someone makes an allegation doesn't make it valid. I don't necessarily take the word of one person ... whether its law enforcement or a civil rights leader. I want to get the facts," Brooks said.

Former Gov. Barnes declined an interview with the Daily Report about Osinski's book, referring all questions to his former top aide, Bobby Kahn.

In an interview this week, Kahn said that Barnes had been in office less than three months when he first learned of trouble brewing between the Putnam County sheriff and the Nuwaubians.

Kahn confirmed that the Georgia governor was "taking his cues" about York and the Nuwaubians from Brooks, and from the GBI, which "was concerned we would have another Waco."

Kahn also said that the Putnam County sheriff didn't apprise Barnes of the child molestation allegations and that the governor was made aware only that a potentially violent confrontation was brewing over local code enforcement.

"Our approach to this wasn't who's right and who's wrong, and whose fault it is," Kahn said. "Our concern was how do we avoid a blow-up?"

"Osinski has determined that Sills was a hero," said Kahn. "Anything that gets in the way of that, he basically ignores. ... If he [Sills] were a hero, he would have told us and would have told the GBI he suspected there was child molestation going on."

But Sills did try, unsuccessfully, to talk to Barnes directly about the Nuwaubians, according to Osinski.

"He wanted to go to Barnes personally and directly. He didn't want to go through the GBI," the journalist said in an interview. But Sills feared that the GBI "might have been compromised" and might leak information about the investigation to York, Osinski explained, because the sheriff was aware that GBI agents had gone to Tama-Re to go fishing. "He simply did not want the GBI to know what the real investigation was."

Nuwaubian deputy loses firing appeal

Last of four challenges

Athens Banner-Herald/August 29, 2007

By Joe Johnson

A woman belonging to a black supremacist sect has lost a bid to regain her job as a Clarke County sheriff's deputy.

Rena Jennings was the last of four deputies to appeal Clarke County Sheriff Ira Edwards' decision to fire them last November for violating jail policies in connection with their affiliations with the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

Among other things, a sheriff's internal investigation found deputies undermined jail security by recruiting prisoners into their sect, distributing Nuwaubian literature in the jail and urging black inmates to rebel against white jailers.

County Personnel Hearing Officer Denny Galis upheld the decisions to fire Jennings and two other deputies, William York and Anthony Montgomery, but ordered the fourth deputy, Bobby Dixon, to be reinstated. A fifth deputy was allowed to resign in November, in lieu of termination.

In earlier cases, Galis issued detailed decisions explaining why he did or did not agree with the sheriff's actions, but in a brief decision released Tuesday, Galis offered no explanation why he upheld Jennings' termination.

"After considering all the documentary evidence presented both before and after the (appeals) hearing, and the testimony of all the witnesses, I do hereby sustain the discipline imposed by Athens-Clarke County," Galis wrote.

Jennings made her case for reinstatement at an appeals hearing Aug. 21 at the county Department of Human Resources.

In upholding the sheriff's decision to fire York, for example, the personnel hearing officer found the former deputy violated policy when he tried to manipulate a polygraph test and couldn't be contacted while on paid administrative leave. The polygraph test was given as part of the sheriff's internal affairs investigation into Nuwaubian activities at the jail.

Galis wrote that Montgomery deserved to be fired because he flagrantly disregarded policy by writing a letter to the Nuwaubians' imprisoned leader, Dwight "Malachi" York, who is serving a 135-year federal prison sentence for convictions on child molestation, racketeering, money laundering and other charges.

In his only decision to reinstate one of the fired jailers, Galis wrote that sheriff's officials should have disciplined Dixon for violating policies but not fire him. Galis found that Dixon broke policy by not returning telephone calls while on paid administrative leave during the internal investigation and for having "general conversations" with other deputies concerning the probe.

Edwards seemed relieved the appeals process was over.

"We respect Mr. Galis's decision and would like to put this behind us and focus on serving the citizens of Athens-Clarke County," Edwards said in a brief statement Tuesday.

But the matter is far from over.

A former Clarke County chief jailer sued Edwards and the county government in federal court in June, claiming his civil rights were violated.

Brett Hart, who is white, alleges in the lawsuit that the black sheriff fired him because Hart initiated the internal investigation of Nuwaubian activities at the jail.

Hart alleges that Edwards "subscribes" to Nuwaubian beliefs and the sheriff hired Nuwaubians as deputies in return for a large campaign contribution the group made when Edwards first ran for office in 2000.

Edwards will not comment on pending litigation.

In a response filed in U.S. District Court, an attorney representing Edwards and the county government denied each allegation without comment, and cited several defenses to the lawsuit, including the sheriff's office "is not a suable entity."

A federal court clerk on Monday notified all parties to the lawsuit that the case had been referred to arbitration, but the attorney representing Edwards and the county government immediately filed notice that his clients do not want to mediate the dispute.

Hart has said he wants a jury to decide the case.

Court Bars 'Absurd' Tax Scheme

Atlanta: A federal court has permanently barred a Georgia man from advising clients that they do not have to pay income taxes because they belong to a group called the Yamassee Native American Tribe.

The court had enjoined Derrick Sanders from promoting the scheme in 2006, but U.S. District Judge Julie E. Carnes wrote that he "refused to back down from his absurd contention that the Yamassee are ... exempt from federal income taxes."

The court said he has prepared forms for his customers to give to their employers to instruct them to stop withholding taxes from their wages. The permanent injunction requires Sanders to post a copy of the court order on his Web site.

Sanders claims to be Grand Master Consul of the Yamassee, previously known as the Nuwaubian Nation. However, the Yamassee has not been officially recognized as a Native American tribe by the federal government. In any case, all U.S. citizens and residents are required to pay taxes, noted the original complaint filed against Sanders in 2005.

Wesley Snipes Faces Three Years In Prison

Hollywood Today/February 1, 2008

By Alex Ben Block

Hollywood, California - "Blade" star Wesley Snipes faces up to three years in prison and payment of over \$13 million in back taxes after being convicted of three misdemeanor counts for failing to file a tax return over six years. However, that actually came as a relief to Snipes in the Florida courtroom when the verdict was unsealed Friday. The actor had been charged by the Internal Revenue Service with multiple felony counts related to a blatant tax avoidance scheme for which Snipes was the poster boy, that could have had the star of "White Men Can't Jump" playing his hoops in the exercise yard of a federal prison for the next 17 years. (use search box for HT's related Snipes stories)

Two of Snipes business associates, tried with him, were convicted of much more serious charges. His co-defendants, tax protester Eddie Ray Kahn and accountant Douglas P. Rosile, were convicted on felony counts of tax fraud and conspiracy. They both face long prison terms, repayment of taxes and fines. .

This marks an end to the highest profile tax case since Leona Helmsley, the wealthy widow of a New York hotel tycoon, was dubbed the queen

of mean, after she famously said, "Only little people pay taxes." Snipes wasn't one of the little people. He didn't file from 1999 until 2005, during which time he earned about \$35 million. IRS officials have said that this trial is meant as an important public statement that if you do not pay your taxes, you will face consequences. The verdict comes just as millions are preparing their taxes.

Snipes, who has been free on \$1 million bond since returning to the U.S. last year from a movie shoot in Africa, had argued the IRS didn't have the right to tax him or even to investigate him. Yet somehow Snipes managed to convince the jury in Ocala that he had been the victim of bad advice, and not a conscious tax avoider.

Snipes attorney had argued that he was caught up in the scheme because he was a celebrity, and that he was the victim of "unscrupulous tax advice" by criminal conspirators Rosile and Kahn. Snipes claimed that he had tried to get the IRS to tell him what they wanted, but that the agency didn't respond.

"Disagreement with the IRS is not fraud of the IRS, is not deception," Snipes attorney had pleaded, according to Time Magazine. "It was an attempt to engage the IRS, to go through the IRS procedures and processes and see who's right."

Amazingly, the court bought that and dropped the felony charges.

The scheme to avoid taxes involved an obscure section of tax code which they interpreted to mean that tax is only owed if income is derived from a foreign corporation. That was what Snipes and his tax preparer, Rosile, claimed in 1997. As a result of not owing any taxes, Snipes claimed he should get a refund of \$7.4 million tax refund.

There are a reported 400 others who took Rosile's advice as well, but the government went after Snipes because his was by far the largest. Snipes later claimed he was the victim of

selective prosecution because of his celebrity and his race. Those claims did not hold up.

The end of this case marks another sad chapter in Snipes fall in a decade from one of Hollywood's most highly paid and sought after stars to a convicted tax evader. Snipes hit his peak in 1998 when he appeared in seven movies including the blockbuster hit "Blade," produced by his company, which grossed \$150 million worldwide and led to two successful sequels. He regularly commanded a salary of up to \$10 million per film, and co-starred along side of A-list stars. That was the year he got a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

That was also around the same time Snipes, who is an expert martial artist, and his brother started the Royal Guard of Amen-Ra, a security firm that provided body guards. That company ran into problems however after it was linked to the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a religious cult of African Americans with an anti-government philosophy that used Egyptian symbols. Snipes has used similar symbols to represent his businesses. He has also since distanced himself from the group in public.

Around 2000, Snipes met Kahn, founder of a tax protest group called American Rights Litigators. He later replaced that with Guiding Light of God Ministries. Both were found by the IRS to have been scams that were designed to avoid paying taxes. Kahn has claimed the government has no jurisdiction over him and refused to defend himself in court.

Rosile was a CPA in Florida and Ohio before being stripped of his licenses in the late 1990s. He is said to have been the tax preparer for Snipes and others counseled by Kahn. Rosile and Kahn split a portion of money from fraudulent tax claims that were successful.

When his federal indictment was first revealed, Snipes was on location in Namibia, on the southeast coast of Africa, making an indie action picture (described as a zombie western) called "Gallowwalker." When he did not immediately surrender there were rumors that Snipes was a

fugitive and wouldn't come back. However, his attorneys opened negotiations with the IRS and he was offered a deal. Snipes did agree to return but later balked at the deal offered by the feds, and choose to go to this trial instead.

Snipes is also still involved in a lawsuit with New Line Cinema, which released all three of the "Blade" movies. He claims they did not pay him all of his \$3.6 million salary, and that they cut him out of creative decisions even though he was credited as one of the producers. He also says they cut down his role in favor of two other actors in the movie, Jessica Biel and Ryan Reynolds. The third "Blade," with a gross of just over \$50 million, was the least successful of the trilogy.

Nuwaubian property on Broad Street brings few bidders

Likely to be reappraised

**Athens Banner Herald,
Georgia/March 5, 2008**

By Joe Johnson

The federal government Tuesday couldn't unload a Westside storefront that once belonged to a religious sect led by convicted child molester Dwight "Malachi" York.

No one came close to meeting the minimum bid of \$530,000 as the U.S. Marshals Service tried to auction off the West Broad Street building once owned by the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

Auctions usually are held on the steps of the Clarke County Courthouse, but rain forced about 20 people to cram into the courthouse to vie for

the property at the corner of West Broad and South Church streets - a 6,360-square-foot, faux-Moorish building that sports Egyptian-themed paintings.

The government seized the building last year to help pay \$566,000 in victim restitution that a federal judge ordered in 2004 as he sentenced York to 135 years in prison.

Only two men bid for the property Tuesday.

The opener offered \$90,000.

Atlanta attorney James Hugh Potts II raised the stakes for the ramshackle building to \$100,000 and eventually offered the high bid of \$150,000, but Assistant U.S. Attorney Bernard Snell said authorities likely will reject the offer.

"We're probably going to re-appraise it," Snell said. "If the value goes down, we'll go from there."

Still, officials will consider Potts' offer through the end of the week.

"I really think I bought the building today," Potts said. "If I have to negotiate some more with the government, I'll be happy to do that."

Federal prosecutors said York used the sect as a front for a criminal enterprise that laundered money and recruited underage girls for sex. A U.S. District Court jury convicted York of 11 counts of child molestation, racketeering, money laundering and other charges after a trial in 2004.

The government already auctioned off other Nuwaubian properties that were seized under federal criminal asset forfeiture laws, including a nine-bedroom, 8,300-square-foot mansion off Timothy Road.

York bought the commercial property at 815 W. Broad St. in 2000 for \$385,000. First he proposed a lodge, then licensed a bookstore that never opened.

A Nuwaubian store at an Atlanta Highway strip mall, "All Eyes on Egypt," closed in 2003.

Potts, who owns a building that houses Luna Baking Corp. near the former Nuwaubian bookstore, hopes to renovate the building into commercial space he can sell to local business people.

"I know that (York) is a bad guy who did terrible things to children, and maybe if we change things for the better, people won't have to drive by (the building) and think about what he did," Potts said.

Potts inspected the building after the auction.

Except for the markings on the outside, the building shows no signs that the Nuwaubians owned it, he said. Inside, Potts found a desk, a fiberglass shower stall and trash. Rain was pouring in through the ceiling.

"It's in very rough shape," Potts said.

Nuwaubian leader jailed, but the sect carries on

Not in Athens, though, as followers move

**Athens Banner-Herald,
Georgia/January 25, 2009**

By Joe Johnson

Nuwaubian leader Dwight "Malachi" York continues to inspire followers in Athens and throughout the country, five years after a federal judge sentenced him to life in prison as a convicted child molester, tax evader and racketeer.

Although their leader is locked up thousands of miles away in Colorado, members of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors still gather in his name, and apparently just recently abandoned Athens for a meeting hall outside of Atlanta.

And a sheriff in Central Georgia, where York built a sprawling compound in the 1990s - where authorities say he molested children as young as 8 and ran his illegal enterprise - still regularly takes calls from law officers in other counties and states asking about the sect as members appear in their communities.

York was convicted Jan. 23, 2004, in U.S. District Court in Brunswick on charges of racketeering, child molestation, transporting minors for unlawful sex and tax evasion.

A judge sentenced the 63-year-old sect leader to 135 years in prison.

'Right knowledge'

Local followers have railed against what they see as misconceptions about their leader, but also won't talk about the state of the Nuwaubian nation.

"I distrust the media," said Anthony Montgomery, a former Clarke County sheriff's deputy who owns a barber shop and beauty salon on Macon Highway. "The media has not been fair to us and has not given our side of the story."

Montgomery was one of four deputies who were fired in November 2006 because they allegedly broke policy by, among other things, distributing unauthorized Nuwaubian literature in the Clarke County Jail and trying to recruit prisoners into their sect. One of the deputies returned to work at the jail after he appealed.

An Athens man with business connections to some of York's followers said the Nuwaubians he knows are contributing members to society.

"As far as I'm concerned, they are an asset to the community," said Walter Allen, publisher of

Nuwaubians in the News

Zebra magazine, a monthly publication that promotes black-owned business and covers the society and entertainment news of the black community in Athens. The publication counts Nuwaubian-owned businesses as advertisers.

"They are a hard-working, productive group of people, and I imagine there are more per capita (Nuwaubian) business owners than any other group of people, even though they don't necessarily all have a storefront," Allen said.

He views the Nuwaubian nation as both a religion and a black-empowerment group.

Allen also published the Metro Free Press, which in February 2007 gave the fired deputies a front-page forum to blast sheriff's officials and the media.

Bobby Dixon, the deputy who got back his job at the jail, denied that the Nuwaubians are racist.

"We support the information in books penned by Malachi York as fact," Dixon wrote in the newspaper. "Especially, the following statement, 'If you can prove it false, then do so, and if not we are as free as the next man to believe what we see fit.'"

That idea is known as "Right knowledge," the cornerstone of York's teachings.

Montgomery is one of many Nuwaubians across Georgia who heeded York's call for followers to join law enforcement.

"I am one of the ones that answered the call when you suggested that brothers join law enforcement agencies," Montgomery wrote to York, in a letter intercepted by U.S. Bureau of Prison officials that sparked the internal probe at the jail. "I have been with the Clarke County Sheriff's Office since April of 2001. Baba, the brothers are with you. We are organizing the Supreme Grand Lodge for your return to give us proper instruction."

Nuwaubians have lobbied for York's release from prison, raising money for legal expenses

and even creating a Web site, www.heisinnocent.com.

Off to Atlanta

The Nuwaubians did establish a new lodge on West Hancock Avenue in Athens, in a black, cinderblock building where the windows are cloaked by thick black curtains.

Faithful from across Georgia and other states packed the lodge each weekend, but they stopped coming in November, according to Allen, who said the Nuwaubians decided to move to metro Atlanta.

A "Family Update" posted Oct. 29 on a Nuwaubian Web site talked about the pending move:

"Sources has it that: That the Master Teacher said that Athens Ga. is no longer safe for Nuwaupians," wrote the site's administrator, Maat Re. (He apparently referred to the group as Nuwaupians because York told followers to learn "Nuwaupic," which sect members believe was the first language ever spoken by man, in a black civilization.)

A business owner next door to the abandoned lodge confirmed that out-of-towners who converged on Athens each weekend came from states away to participate in Nuwaubian gatherings.

On personal message boards, Nuwaubians advertised a concert there in October.

A large sign still hangs inside the entrance door, proclaiming York's innocence.

Sect members first thought of moving to Thomaston, Maat Re wrote, but settled on Decatur because it is close to Atlanta and offered more job opportunities.

"Its predominately a Nubian (black) population, which may offer less attention and harassment from the Tamahu Authorities," Maat Re wrote, using the Nuwaubian term for whites.

Nuwaubians in the News

Going, going ...

The former lodge now is empty, along with a more visible vestige of the Nuwaubian presence in Athens - a 6,360-square-foot, faux-Moorish building with Egyptian-themed paintings at the corner of West Broad and South Church streets.

The government seized the Nuwaubian store to help pay victim restitution, but hasn't been able to sell it because no one will pay the \$530,000 asking price.

A mansion York bought off Timothy Road in 1999 also was seized by the government and sold at auction for \$635,000.

Even before York was convicted, the Southern Poverty Law Center added the Nuwaubian nation to its list of hate groups because York preached black supremacy and hatred, according to Mark Potok, director of the SPLC's Intelligence Project.

Though the number of people who profess Nuwaubian beliefs has dwindled during the past five years, the group remains on the list.

"In the case of the Nuwaubians, they still clearly venerate York, whose ideology was black supremacist, that whites should be killed and they are the devils, and so on," Potok said.

"The Nuwaubians are a much smaller group now because a lot of people have left because of York's conviction and his treatment of the children," he said. "Those who have not left have not abandoned (York's) racist ideology."

Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills, who began the investigation into reported child abuse at the group's Tama-Re compound near Eatonton in 2002, wonders if the Nuwaubian nation even is a viable entity anymore.

"Does it still exist as an organization? I really can't say," Sills said on Friday. "But I still receive calls from law enforcement agencies every couple of months wanting to know about the Nuwaubians."

Though he disagreed with their ideology, Sills saw most Nuwaubians as law-abiding citizens who didn't know they were selling books, making crafts and laboring for a man at the top of an illegal organization.

York's Ancient Egiptian Order Web site offered a range of Nuwaubian products, from \$400 mirrors and \$45 scripture books to tubes of toothpaste and deodorant decorated with an image of York in full Egyptian headdress. Videotapes and magazines espousing the Nuwaubian philosophies and samples of their colorful garb could be bought by credit card or money order.

"I would say most of them were not aware they were contributing to a criminal enterprise," Sills said.

Nuwaubians over time

- Early 1970s: Originally named Dwight York, Dr. Malachi Z. York establishes a sect in Brooklyn, N.Y., called the Ansaru Allah community, a religious group that incorporated Muslim traditions.
- 1993: Claiming to be an extraterrestrial, from the planet Rizq, York relocates his followers to Putnam County, where his United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors establishes their Eatonton compound, Tama-Re.
- 1998: York buys a \$528,000 house off Timothy Road in Athens and two years later a storefront on West Broad Street.
- Jan. 23, 2004: A jury convicts York in U.S. District Court in Brunswick on charges of racketeering, child

molestation, transporting minors for unlawful sex and tax evasion. A judge sentences him to 135 years in prison.

- 2007: The Nuwaubians establish a lodge at 1337 W. Hancock Ave., and reportedly abandon it in November 2008 to move to Decatur.

Fading symbols of sect torn away

Facade on former Nuwaubian bookstore demolished

Atlanta Banner-Herald/February 18, 2009

By Joe Johnson

A controversial religious sect's most visible vestige in Athens has turned to dust.

On Tuesday, demolition workers stripped the Egyptian-themed facade from 815 W. Broad St., the former bookstore of the United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

They began ripping into the stucco that covered the building's red brick front walls the same morning Athens real estate investor Jimmy Wilfong closed the deal with the U.S. government, which seized the building in 2006.

"I've been anxious to pull that facade off for two months," said Wilfong, who successfully bid \$220,000 for the property in December.

"I want to get the building back to how I remember it," he said.

Before Nuwaubian leader Dwight "Malachi" York bought the building in 2000, it housed Ideal Amusements Co., where Wilfong worked as a student in high school and college.

Federal prosecutors said York used the Nuwaubian sect as a front for a criminal enterprise that laundered money and groomed underage girls for sex. A U.S. District Court jury convicted York of 11 counts of child molestation, racketeering, money laundering and other charges in 2004.

The government seized York's mansion off Timothy Road and auctioned it off in 2006 for \$635,000, then last March tried to sell the former bookstore, but no one came close to the minimum bid of \$530,000 during an auction at the Clarke County Courthouse.

Government officials realized that the 6,300-square-foot building was overpriced - that it needs extensive repairs - and accepted Wilfong's bid in an online auction ran through mid-December.

"The roof is caving in; it needs new wiring, new plumbing and a new facade," Wilfong said. "All I bought is a parking lot with four walls."

But Wilfong already has one prospective tenant for the building, which he hopes to open in about three months.

"I've got crews lined up and ready to go," he said. "It's a real good time to do something like this because I have faith in the economy, and there's a lot of workers giving good prices who are ready to work."

Wilfong worked a decade for Ideal Amusements, a business the late Charles Johnson opened in 1971.

He drove from town to town to collect money from jukeboxes, pinball machines and pool tables that Ideal Amusements serviced, he said.

Johnson "was like a second father to me," Wilfong said, adding, "Everyone who worked there was a character and we had a lot of fun."

Though 63-year-old York will spend the rest of his life in federal prison - a judge sentenced him to 135 years - York continues to inspire followers in Athens and throughout the country.

An estimated 500 Nuwaubians lived on a 476-acre compound the sect owned in Putnam County, but they dispersed after York's arrest and conviction. The government seized that property as well.

Many Nuwaubians relocated to the Athens area, and each weekend cars with tags from across Georgia and out of state packed the parking lot of a nondescript lodge on West Hancock Avenue.

The group abandoned the lodge toward the end of 2008, reportedly for a new meeting place outside of Atlanta.

Convicted Nuwaubian leader asks court to dismiss his 135-year prison sentence

Macon.com, Georgia/July 14, 2009

By Amy Leigh Womack

United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors founder Malachi York has filed a motion asking a federal judge to vacate his 135-year prison sentence due to prosecutorial misconduct allegedly connected to his January 2004 child molestation trial.

In the motion, filed on July 7, York alleges FBI agents threatened and coerced witnesses to testify against him and commit perjury. He also alleges prosecutors used allegations of pornographic tapes of York having sex with minors without any tangible proof of the tapes' existence to taint the jury.

York was the leader of the Nuwaubian group described by prosecutors as a cult-like group which moved from a compound in upstate New York to Putnam County in 1993.

He was arrested in May 2002 on charges of molesting children inside the compound.

York was convicted after a three-week trial in Brunswick. The trial was moved because of pretrial publicity.

York was sentenced in April 2004 to serve 135 years in federal prison.

The motion includes affidavits of several of York's alleged victims in which the victims now say York never molested them, but they say they were threatened by FBI agents to make false statements.

One of the alleged victims said she was at school when she was taken to the counseling office to be questioned about York, according to court records.

"I told them what they wanted to hear because I felt that I would go to jail if I didn't go along with what they were saying," the alleged victim said, according to court records.

Another alleged victim swore in an affidavit that an FBI agent told him that if he cooperated and made certain statements he could get his mother out of prison. The alleged victim still testified he was never molested, according to the records.

Another alleged victim said he was striped from his family and taken to a small house in Milledgeville without his parents' consent after being interviewed by the FBI.

"... I was out of mind and guns were pointing at me. I thought that I was going to die and I told them anything," the victim said, according to the records.

York also alleges none of the prosecution's witness interviews were recorded "as not to show the tactics used to convince these witnesses to perjure themselves in court," according to the motion.

In addition to requesting that his sentence be vacated, York also has requested a hearing based on the witnesses recanting their testimony.

Information from The Telegraph's archives was included in this report.

Nuwaubians speak out in support of jailed founder, allege miscarriage of justice

Macon.com, Georgia/August 26, 2009

By Eric Newcomer

About 300 people gathered today outside the federal courthouse in Macon to draw attention to a petition for appeal filed on behalf of United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors founder Malachi York.

Most in attendance were York's followers and enthusiastically applauded the brief remarks of Nuwaubian leaders in attendance.

The 23-page "petition for certificate of appealability," which was submitted to the

courts this afternoon, raises several objections to previous court rulings.

York was sentenced in April 2004 to a 135-year prison sentence for molesting children inside the Nuwaubian compound.

The document submitted today lists grounds for appeal such as ineffective assistance of counsel, prosecutorial misconduct, judicial misconduct, and lack of jurisdiction. In the document York argues as he has previously that the court does not have the jurisdiction to convene or conduct a trial due to what he claims to be his status as a Liberian diplomat and citizen.

A federal judge denied a previous motion by York to throw out his prison sentence because of prosecutorial misconduct, according to U.S. District Court records.

Dana Dixon, a representative of the United Nuwaubians World Wide, attended the event dressed in a blue robe.

"Everyone should be able to have due process," she said.

She accused the government of intimidating witnesses and of other forms of misconduct.

Several Nuwaubians entered the court house and filed the brief on behalf of York.

Bernard Foster, 42, the CEO of the Holy Tabernacle Church where the group once met, said York's case had been "railroaded" through.

Foster said the group gathered Wednesday to show their support for York.

"It's absolutely a shower of support," he said.

Notaries play role in fake document ploy

York's sect at it again

**Athens Banner-Herald,
Georgia/December 20, 2009**

By Joe Johnson

Followers of convicted child molester and sect leader Dwight "Malachi" York - some from Clarke County - are bombarding officials at a federal maximum security lock-up with fake documents that seek to free him from a 135-year prison term.

The documents, some stamped by Athens-Clarke notaries, claim York has been falsely imprisoned since 2004 and should be released because he is an African diplomat, officials said.

"They tried to get him out of prison by saying he was a diplomat from Liberia and that he's being illegally held under the Geneva Conventions, but that doesn't apply, because he's not a prisoner of war," Athens-Clarke police Detective Beverly Russell said last week.

York is leader of the Nuwaubian Nation of Moors, a purported black supremacist group that is on the Southern Poverty Law Center's list of hate groups.

Officials said he used the sect as a front for a criminal enterprise, and in 2004, York was convicted in U.S. District Court in Brunswick on charges of racketeering, child molestation, transporting minors for unlawful sex and tax evasion.

An estimated 500 Nuwaubians once lived on a 476-acre compound the sect owned in Putnam County, but they dispersed after York's conviction, and the government seized the property.

Many Nuwaubians relocated to Athens, where York had owned a mansion off Timothy Road, and they met each weekend at a lodge on West Hancock Avenue. The group abandoned the lodge toward the end of 2008, reportedly for a new meeting place outside of Atlanta.

Still, six notaries public who placed their stamp on the fraudulent documents that sought to free York have Athens addresses, according to police.

By placing their seals on fake documents, the notaries committed misdemeanor fraud, Russell said, but for police to bring charges they would have to prove that the documents were notarized in Georgia, a near impossibility.

"When they wrote all this stuff up and notarized it they violated their notary code" because they knew the documents were false, the detective said. "It they could have done it anywhere, in any state."

It's now a civil issue, she said.

Russell turned over the documents to Clarke County Court Clerk Beverly Logan, who is responsible for commissioning notaries as well as canceling them.

Logan said she was looking into whether the notaries abused their authority.

"I just received the police reports, and I have some researching to do on the state statutes," Logan said. "Then, I'm going to afford them the chance to have an administrative hearing."

The FBI gave Russell copies of the notarized fake documents on Dec. 10, after they got them from officials at the so-called supermax federal prison in Florence, Colo.

York is housed there with the nation's highest risk prisoners, including Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski, Olympic Centennial Park bomber Eric Robert Rudolph and Ramzi Yousef, who helped plan the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

Nuwaubians in the News

York's followers also gave fake documents to the staff judge advocate at Fort Carson in Colorado, officials said.

Putnam County Sheriff Howard Sills, who began the investigation into reported child abuse at the Nuwaubian compound near Eatonton in 2002, chuckled at the latest twist in the sect leader's bizarre history.

"It just never stops," he said.

Sills has been sued more than a dozen times by Nuwaubians, and one sect member even placed a fake lien on property the sheriff owns.

"If we were able to identify the person who filed the lien, we intended to prosecute him for making a false statement, which is a felony," Sill said.

The constant lawsuits and fake declarations apparently are an attempt by York's followers to "gum up" the legal system, the sheriff said.

Sills can't understand why, six years after he was convicted of heinous crimes that involved molesting children as young as 8 years old, people remain faithful to a man whose life has been a continuous con. Born as Dwight York in Massachusetts, he became Dr. Malachi Z. York when he established a sect in Brooklyn, N.Y., called the Ansaru Allah community, a religious

group that incorporated Muslim traditions. He also told followers he came to Earth from the planet Rizq, and in 1993 York and his clan relocated to the Putnam County compound.

"I've never been able to rationalize how seemingly intelligent people would follow a man who started off saying he was an extraterrestrial, then changed to being a reincarnated pharaoh, then an American Indian chief, then head of all Shriners or Masons in the world," Sills said. "He also claimed at one time to be a rabbi but was an Islamic imam to start with, then after the trial he ended up being a diplomat.

"You can rationalize how someone follows a charismatic leader if they maintain a consistent philosophy, but how do you go from being an Islamic imam to a rabbi?" he said. "First he came here on a space ship, and years later he came here from Liberia on a diplomatic passport."

In his most recent court filings three months ago - including a petition to quash the indictment that sent him to prison - York calls his flock members of the United Worldwide Nuwaubians Church.

He refers to himself in the documents as H.E. Dr. Malachi Z. York-EL, with copyright and trademark logos attached to his name.

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