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Former Hate Group Member to Speak at Illinois Wesleyan

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Former Hate Group Member to Speak at Illinois Wesleyan

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.—Thomas Martinez, a former member of one of America's most violent anti-government movements, comes to Illinois Wesleyan as a changed man. He will speak in the Hansen Student Center, 300 E. Beecher St., on Thursday, Feb. 6 at 7 p.m. His speech is titled "Inside the Brotherhood of Hate."

Martinez grew up poor in Philadelphia in the 1960s. In his junior high school days, black students were first bussed into his very segregated and primarily white neighborhood. In school he remembers "the daily sense of victory white students had each day as blacks were bussed back home to *their* neighborhoods." This sense of white supremacy is something that Martinez latched onto and became an integral part of his life.

By the time he was 21, Martinez, then an unemployed high school dropout and young father, found comfort and purpose in the Ku Klux Klan's battle for white superiority. By his late 20s he began to lose interest in the Klan but still felt the need to belong to a similar kind of group. He found a place in other hate groups including the National Alliance, Christian Identity, and The Order.

After some time with The Order, Martinez, then trying to support his own growing family, realized that he had gone too far with his membership in these groups. By 1984 he sought to amend the wrong doings in his life and became an FBI informant, helping to fight against white supremacist, neo-Nazi, and anti-government groups.

Martinez's autobiography, *Brotherhood of Murder* discusses his attraction to hate groups and the changes he underwent in deciding to go undercover for the FBI. The book has recently been turned into a Showtime Original Picture starring William Baldwin, Peter Gallagher, and Kelly Lynch, which is said by critics to be a "riveting account of a man finding his conscience, and positive proof that people can and do change."