

An Evening of Stories and Conversations on Hate in Southern California

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Documenting Hate

by [ProPublica](#)

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Tracking Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents

ProPublica started the [Documenting Hate](#) project about 18 months ago to track and cover hate, after observing a surge in reported hate incidents after the 2016 election and learning about the [poor quality of hate crime data](#). Realizing that we couldn't tackle this issue on our own, we built a coalition of more than 140 news organizations to help collect, verify and tell the stories. On May 30 we joined forces with one partner, KPCC Southern California Public Radio, for an event taking a deep look at the history of hate in Southern California and the experiences of its residents today.

Co-hosted by Adolfo Guzman-Lopez, education correspondent for KPCC, and ProPublica

reporter A.C. Thompson, “Shades of Hate — Then, Now, Tomorrow” brought more than a dozen local scholars, activists, artists and community members to the Los Angeles Theatre Center for a three-part conversation.

“There are layers of history yet to be uncovered, especially when it comes to hate, which has, more often than not, not been in the Chamber of Commerce pamphlets and in the official histories as they’re written,” said Guzman-Lopez in the event’s opening discussion on historical trends in Southern California. Guzman-Lopez highlighted some of these little-discussed histories, including the widespread lynchings of Mexicans in the 1850s and the killing of 18 Chinese boys and men by a mob in 1871.

Thompson, who has reported extensively on [hate groups in Southern California](#), noted another secret history of the region: Henry William Head, a key figure in the creation of Orange County, was an active leader of the Ku Klux Klan, and in the 1920s Anaheim was one of the strongest centers of Klan activity in the country.

“Our goal with the work that we’re doing is to hold organized hate groups accountable,” Thompson said. “We’re looking at law enforcement and seeing whether they’re really going after these people. We’re looking at the people who are aiding and abetting them. We’re looking at people who *don’t* want the spotlight and shining it on them.”

Documenting Hate’s efforts to track and report hate crimes rely in part on participation from the public. We’ve [collected more than 5,000 reports](#) in a database of tips for use by journalists, researchers and civil rights organizations. “When we started Documenting Hate ... we felt that if we can change things on the ground and have some sort of true impact, that’s ideal, but if the least we can do is bear witness to this moment, then we need to bear witness to it,” said Thompson. “And we need to allow people to tell their stories and share what they’ve been through.”

Throughout the evening, residents of Southern California did just that, through conversations with people working to help bridge their communities and end hate crimes in Southern California, including **Malissia R. Clinton**, senior vice president of The Aerospace Corporation, whose family home was firebombed in Manhattan Beach three years ago; **Traci Kato-Kiryama**, an organizer with the [VigilantLOVE Coalition](#); **Amjad Mahmood Khan**, national director of public affairs for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA; and **Irene Monica Sanchez**, an ethnic studies educator at Azusa Unified School District and Bard College-Los Angeles.

Brian Levin, the director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University San Bernardino, provided an analysis of hate crimes data, along with **Edward Dunbar**, an expert on the psychology of hate crime perpetrators, while a host of local artists and community members shared personal reflections about their experiences with hate — and forward-looking affirmations on what they vow to do in the face of it.

“Shades of Hate — Then, Now, Tomorrow”

Watch the full program.



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