



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on September 5, 2017

SPLC Sends Millions to Opaque Offshore Tax Havens

News that Morris Dee's Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) [transferred](#) some \$5 million offshore in 2014 caught many by surprise. For example, tax expert Amy Sterling Casil, CEO of the nonprofit consulting firm Pacific Human Capital, upon learning of the transactions, said:

I've never known a U.S.-based nonprofit dealing in human rights or social services to have any foreign bank accounts.... I am stunned to learn of transfers of millions to offshore bank accounts.

It is a huge red flag and would [be] completely unacceptable to any wealthy, responsible, experienced board member who was committed to a charitable mission who I ever worked with.

It is unethical for any U.S.-based charity to invest large sums overseas. I know of no legitimate reason for any U.S.-based nonprofit to put money in overseas, unregulated bank accounts.



Apparently Casil has been away. Dees is simply fulfilling his life-long goal to become wealthy, and SPLC is his tool to accomplish it. Dee's original business partner, Millard Fuller, recalled, "Morris and I ... shared the overriding purpose of making a pile of money. We were not particular about how we did it, we just wanted to be independently rich."

The pair started out in direct mail, marketing cookbooks and similar items. They bought George McGovern's mailing list following his defeat for the presidency in 1972 and discovered that through using liberal outrage over "southern poverty" and Dees' writing skills, they could raise millions.

The breakthrough came in 1984 when Dees brought a highly publicized lawsuit against the United Klans of America (UKA) on behalf of Beulah Mae Donald. Her son had been murdered by two UKA thugs in 1981, and Dees obtained a \$7 million judgment against the Klan. Although the actual financial recovery from the nearly broke UKA amounted to less than \$50,000, Dees turned it into a direct mail marketing goldmine, raising an estimated \$9 million from his direct-mail solicitations.

As Mark Pulliam, writing for the *City Journal*, noted: "The die was cast; henceforth, the SPLC could pursue essentially meaningless but headline-grabbing cases, exploiting its uncollectible verdicts through sensational fundraising appeals that generated massive donations."

It's no wonder, then, that Dees has been inducted into the Direct Marketing Association's Hall of Fame.

Dees not only pays himself well — \$370,000 in salary and bonuses in 2015 — but also Richard Cohen, the outfit's president, who received a similar amount. The 75 attorneys associated with the SPLC enjoyed \$20 million in salaries in 2015 as well. That was the same year that SPLC booked just \$61,000 in expenses for "legal services."

And its wealth has been piling up along the way. Dan Gainor of the Media Research Center (MRC) called out the SPLC for the fraud that it is:



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The SPLC is an anti-conservative, anti-Christian hate group that the media have given pretend legitimacy to. One glance at their 990 tax forms is a reminder just what a fund-raising super-power it is.

Its assets are over \$328 million in 2015 [\$353 million in 2016] and went up \$13 million in just one year. It doesn't need new liberal money. It could operate for at least six years and never raise a penny. It's like a perpetual motion machine for fundraisers.

This makes SPLC "probably the richest poverty organization in the history of the world," said Charlotte Allen in the *Weekly Standard*.

The *Washington Free Beacon* uncovered the details of the \$5 million that Dees sent offshore: In 2014, he sent \$960,000 to Tiger Global Private Investment Partners IX located in the Cayman Islands, \$102,000 to BPV-III Cayman X Limited, and \$157,574 to BPV-III Cayman XI Limited. In 2015, Dees sent \$2.2 million on two separate occasions to foreign entities with the same mailing address in Grand Cayman. The *Beacon* could find no other details over the transfers, while this writer noted that according to the website of Tiger Global Management, it takes investors' monies and invests them "primarily in the global internet, technology, telecom, media, consumer and industrial sectors" with "a ten-year investment horizon and targets growth-oriented private companies."

This might come as a surprise to George Clooney, Tim Cook, and JP Morgan Chase, who have willingly and generously filled SPLC's coffers thinking that Dees was doing a good work. Cook's company Apple pledged \$2 million and vowed to match employee contributions to the SPLC two-to-one. It then solicited its customers coming to its iTunes store to making further donations to Dees' financial future.

The *Baltimore Sun* summed up the SPLC scam this way:

Its business is fundraising, and its success at raking in the cash is based on its ability to sell gullible people on the idea that present-day America is awash in white racism and anti-Semitism, which it will fight tooth-and-nail as the public-interest law firm that it purports to be.

Photo of Morris Dees: [Tim Pierce via Wikipedia](#)

An Ivy League graduate and former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at [LightFromTheRight.com](#), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.

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