

I just heard about and then listened to Steven Forrest's recent appearance on a podcast [1]. In it, he uses hard N-word [2], discusses his alleged relation to Nathan Bedford Forrest, and attempts to rationalize the "original motivation" for the establishment of the KKK (which he states was to protect southern widows [3]). I have included my unformatted citations below. I think his statements warrant a comment in this space.

What do we do when a renowned community member uses a racial slur rooted in a history of violence against Black people? How do we contend with the fact that he was apparently well-intentioned and convinced that his statements were appropriate in the context of the episode's topic (grappling with "shadow work")? How should younger and/or less influential astrologers push back or correct this rhetoric without worrying that it will close doors for them in their astrological careers? How do you explain to a seventy-seven-year-old man that his claim that the KKK was founded with the "original motivation" to "protect southern widows" is not only shockingly outdated, but a clear example of propagandized rhetoric (propaganda is still propaganda even if we internalize it without knowing it as such)?

In Steven Forrest's own words on the podcast, the southern widows whom the KKK sought to protect lived on various "forty acr[e]" plots of land [3]. In other words, these widows and their children were the surviving benefactors of massive estates, more plainly known as slave plantations. The following is—in my opinion—a more factual translation of Steven Forrest's statement [3]: the KKK was originally formed to protect the private property and wealth acquired via the Atlantic slave trade. These southern widows on their forty acres with their seven kids would not have been afforded such a life but for the "Institution" that was so integral to the development of the early American economy that it was enshrined in the country's earliest and dearest legal document. Above all, the KKK was founded to guard their community's most valuable possession: their whiteness [4].

In response to the backlash against his statements, Steven Forrest left two comments under an Instagram reel criticizing him [5]. The first read: "Please don't confuse strong medicine with the disease." The second read: "There is only one medicine against racism stronger than friendship between Black people and White [sic] people and that is when they dare to speak honestly about the damage they each sustained being raised in a racist society [sic]". He had a clear opportunity to engage with people's reactions and concerns, but instead chose to double down on his statements, glossing over a painfully ironic opportunity to "speak honestly about the damage," [5]. The very logic that seems to drive Steven Forrest's belief that he operates harmlessly and in good faith is what often leaves so many marginalized peoples (I can only speak for a few, relevantly Black people) exhausted by and discouraged from engaging with shared spaces that

have historically minimized or outright excluded them. I love astrology and I want to feel safe within our community. I think every one of us has a right to safety *and* comfort in the spaces we choose to frequent. I feel very lucky to be a part of today's astrology movement, and even luckier to be a part of this small slice of it (as always, thank you CB and TAP). And, perhaps most pressing, I wish that I didn't feel the need to write statements like this—a sort of cautious peek from behind the curtain—just to check whether I am safe, respected, and seen as equal by my fellow astrology enthusiasts.

I know the world is on fire and this might seem negligible compared to the increasingly dire issues facing us all. But, it is discussions like this that allow us to grow into ourselves. My sense of the societal mood in the year 2026 is that we all ache for community but find ourselves wary of difference. I hope my thoughts embolden you to discard your wariness and embrace your curiosity and compassion in the pursuit of community.

Unformatted Citations:

[1] Link to the podcast episode; discussed portion from 40:15 - 54:32:

<https://youtu.be/MMGpX30Wbr4?si=U8GCaWiRbq1Ao2eR&t=2415>.

[2] Podcast at 41:22.

[3] Pulled quote from Steven Forrest on the podcast episode, 53:23-54:31: “Nathan Bedford Forrest, there’s much that is not defensible about him. But, in his defense, after the Civil War there were emancipated Black people with, you know, zero resources, you know, starving and confused. And there were countless southern widows, you know, their husbands having been killed in the War and they got forty acres and seven kids and it’s just them. And that was a bad combination. And the KKK was originally formed to protect southern widows, widows of the fallen soldiers. And that quickly got very racialized, and, you know, partly for realistic reasons I suspect, because the emancipated slaves were in an impossible situation, too. And so it was just dangerous for everybody. And obviously it went to hell very quickly, I’m not defending the KKK. But the original motivation was to protect southern widows.”

[4] “Whiteness as Property” by Cheryl I. Harris:

<https://harvardlawreview.org/print/no-volume/whiteness-as-property/>.

[5] Steven Forrest’s response to backlash in an Instagram comment (there are two comments, both are pinned under this reel):

https://www.instagram.com/reel/Dbd0PBHxMQm/?comment_id=18183428209397283.