

News at a Glance

White bouncers get change of venue

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Four white bouncers accused of killing a black college student on Bourbon Street will be tried by jurors from outside New Orleans, the Louisiana Supreme Court has ruled.

The 6-1 ruling overturned a state appeal court decision against the request by Clay Montz, 34, Matthew Taylor, 24, Arthur Irons, 43, and Brandon Vicknair, 24, all of whom are charged with manslaughter of Levon Jones and are free on \$50,000 bonds.

District Judge Raymond Bigelow was correct to order a change of venue in their trial, the justices concluded.

Jones, 26, of Statesboro, Ga., was pinned to the sidewalk outside Razzoo Bar & Patio after a member of his party was denied entrance to the club based on a dress-code violation on New Year's Eve 2004, police said.

Coroner Frank Minyard said Jones was asphyxiated. He ruled the death a homicide.

The four may be tried separately, but none wanted a jury selected from New Orleans, convinced that there was no chance of a fair trial.

The dissent was written by the one black justice, Bernette Johnson of New Orleans. She said the court should try to choose a jury before deciding one couldn't be found.

She said many high-profile cases have been tried in the parish where they took place, including that of New Orleans police officer Antoinette Frank, on death row for killing a former patrol partner and two other people at a Vietnamese restaurant in 1995.

Shift in Baltimore police strategy

BALTIMORE (AP) — Arrest statistics through August provide dramatic evidence of the city's move away from the zero tolerance policing advocated by Gov. Martin O'Malley during his two terms as Baltimore's mayor.

A report by the Baltimore State's Attorney's office shows police not only made fewer arrests, compared to recent years, but higher quality arrests.

In 2005, police made about 100,000 arrests — nearly one-sixth of Baltimore's population of 640,000. Last year, police arrested 67,000 people, including 45,947 through August. This year, arrests had dropped to 38,460 through August.

Police Commissioner Frederick H. Bealefeld, 3rd, who was confirmed last week, called the volume of arrests in previous years "mind-boggling."

"Did we really accomplish a lot doing that?" Bealefeld asked during an interview with The (Baltimore) Sun. Instead of filling the city's Central Booking and Intake Center "with a whole bunch of arrests for arrests' sake, ... we're going to be much more focused."

As mayor, O'Malley advocated a zero tolerance approach, similar to that advocated by former New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. The approach included strategies such as "stop and frisk," popular under Commissioner Leonard D. Hamm, and the "broken windows" or quality-of-life-crimes crackdown, popular under O'Malley's appointees, Ed Norris and Kevin Clark. O'Malley brought Norris and Clark down from New York, where they were veterans of the zero policing campaign there.

Mayor Sheila Dixon promised to change the approach when she took office in January, after O'Malley became governor.



Dixon

Birmingham ranks high for number of minority, female managers

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Birmingham tops cities in the southeastern United States for the number of minorities holding management positions at private companies and ranked second for the number of female managers, according to a study analyzing data from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce analysis of EEOC data from 2005 showed that minorities made up 24.5 percent of managers at companies employing 100 or more people and federal contractors with 50 or more employees. Women made up 38.2 percent of the management at such firms. Birmingham surpassed Southeastern peers such as Atlanta, Charlotte and Nashville.

Chamber researcher Larry Holt said the trend shows signs of the city's progress when it comes to upward mobility for women and minorities.

Birmingham's percentage of minority managers in 2005 was up from 14.8 percent in 2001, surpassing the national average, according to Holt.

Congressman: stop racially motivated

CHICAGO (AP) — An Illinois congressman said he was a victim of racial profiling when police gave him a traffic ticket alleging he swerved over the center line.

U.S. Rep. Danny Davis, who is black, said he will go to traffic court to challenge the \$75 ticket given to him early Monday by two white officers.

"I'm not one of these people who cry racism," Davis told The Associated Press on Friday. "I'm a person who believes in hard work and follows the rules."

Davis, 66, said he was on his way home from co-hosting his Sunday late-night radio talk show, "Talking to the People," and was driving with three black passengers when he was stopped.

Interim Police Supt. Dana Starks said in a statement that the department "does not encourage, tolerate or condone racial profiling on any level." He said Davis "was stopped on probable cause and issued a citation for violating a traffic law."

In 2005, state Sen. James Meeks, a popular black minister, accused police of racial profiling after a white Chicago police officer stuck a gun in his face and repeatedly shouted at him to get back in his car during a traffic stop.

State lawmakers are gathering data to try to determine whether there is a pattern of racial profiling in traffic stops.



Davis

Study says that Washington D.C. blacks being hit hard by HIV/AIDS

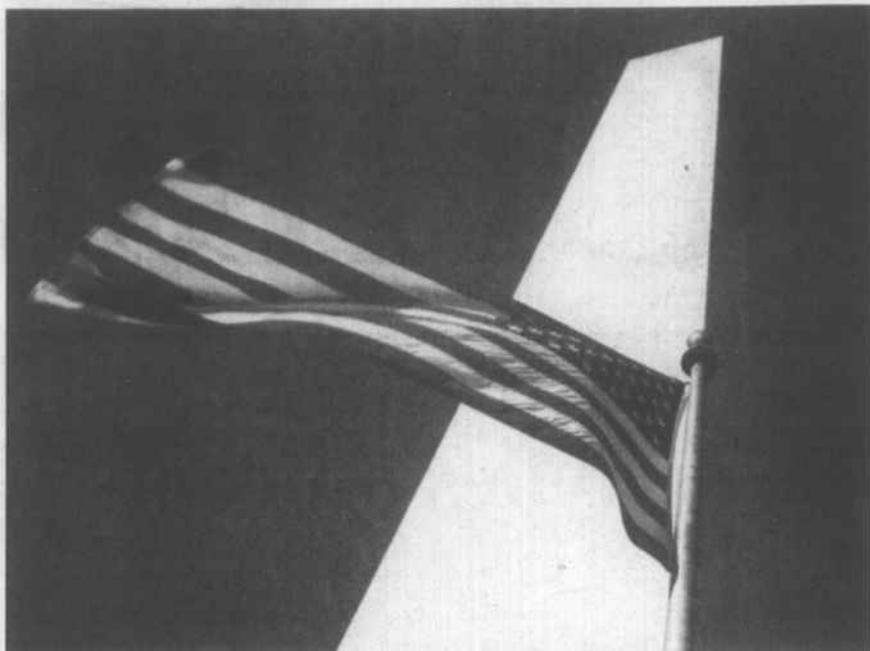
BY STEPHEN MANNING
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Rates of AIDS and HIV infections in Washington are the worst among the city's black population, while an alarming number of new cases are appearing in women and even some young children, according to a broad report released Monday by city officials.

"It is a modern epidemic that affects all populations of the District of Columbia," Washington Mayor Adrian Fenty said while outlining plans to increase testing for the disease and strengthen prevention measures in the nation's capital.

The statistics in the study by the city's HIV/AIDS Administration and George Washington University paint a grim picture. There are roughly 128 cases of AIDS per 100,000 city residents, far surpassing the national average of 14 cases per 100,000 people. City health officials say Washington has the highest AIDS rate among major cities across the country.

Black people make up more than 80 percent of the AIDS and HIV cases in the district but represent only 57 percent of the city's residents. Washington had 9 percent of all pediatric AIDS cases



nationally in 2005 despite having an estimated population of only 580,000 — a small fraction of the nation's overall population.

Despite the disease's reputation as a scourge of gay male populations and intravenous drug users, the biggest percentage increase in HIV cases since 2001 came from heterosexual contact. The number of women living with

AIDS has grown 76 percent over the past six years. Black women make up more than 90 percent of new female HIV cases.

City officials said the study was the first to catalog all cases of both the human immunodeficiency virus, known as HIV, and cases where the virus causes the deterioration of the immune system, commonly referred to

as AIDS.

Previous reports cataloged only AIDS cases. The report released Monday covers data collected between January 2001 and November 2006.

In all, the city counted 7,947 newly reported cases of HIV and AIDS during the study period. Since AIDS arose in the early 1980s, the

See HIV on A6

Crowd gathers on anniversary of 50-shot death

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — An overnight vigil was followed by a solemn march Sunday morning as dozens of people observed the first anniversary of the slaying of an unarmed man on his wedding day.

The vigil began Saturday night on the Queens street where, on Nov. 25, 2006, undercover officers unleashed 50 bullets at Sean Bell's car, killing him.

With the crowd gathered around her, Bell's bride-to-be spoke about her fiancé.

"I want justice, but no matter what happens, it won't bring Sean back," said Nicole Paultre Bell.



Bell

She was joined by relatives and supporters, including the Rev. Al Sharpton, for the six-and-a-half hour vigil. The crowd then marched arm-in-arm to a nearby church where Sharpton delivered a sermon early Sunday.

Some City Council members had also announced plans for an overnight vigil in the same area.

Bell's fiancée, Nicole Paultre Bell, has noted that the anniversary comes as the family awaits the outcome of a criminal case against three officers. Officers Michael Oliver and Giscard Isnora have pleaded not guilty to manslaughter; Officer Marc Cooper pleaded not guilty to reckless endangerment. A trial is scheduled this winter.

"I just keep asking myself, 'Why does this have to be my children? Why me? Why do we have to be the ones to go through this?'" Paultre Bell told the Daily News in an interview published Saturday. She and Bell, whose name she legally adopted after his death, had two daughters, now 4 and 1.

Bell and two friends were shot as they were leaving his bachelor party at a strip club, where the officers were probing reports of prostitution.

Police union officials and defense lawyers have said the officers believed Bell and his friends were headed to his car to retrieve a gun. No weapons were found.

The men had already reached the vehicle when an officer approached. According to police, the car lurched forward and bumped Isnora before twice slamming into an unmarked police minivan. Isnora has said through his lawyer that he saw one of the men make a suspicious move.

The seriously wounded survivors, Trent Benefield and Joseph Guzman, say the plainclothes officers never identified themselves as police before opening fire. Isnora says he did.

The shooting sparked protests, including one in which thousands of demonstrators marched down Fifth Avenue shortly before Christmas, counting in unison from one to 50 to mark the number of shots police

had fired.

Some saw the shooting as symbolic of excessive police force against black New Yorkers. Bell was black, as are Benefield and Guzman. The officers are white, Hispanic and black.

After the shooting, the New York Police Department commissioned the RAND Corp., a think tank, to look for ways to reduce the risk of so-called

"reflexive" or "contagious" shooting — the phenomenon of officers firing an excessive barrage of bullets in a chain reaction.

Paultre Bell has filed a lawsuit against the department, the city, the indicted officers and two others who were not charged. Her suit argues that the officers were poorly trained and opened fire without provocation.



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