



More than a million gathered for the Million Man March three years ago. Anniversary services for the event were held last week.

Farrakhan celebrates March's anniversary

By KALPANA SRINIVASAN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan marked the third anniversary of the Million Man March by calling for Americans to seek atonement, using President Clinton as an example of the need for redemption.

Farrakhan said Friday night he returned to the Capital not to "placate Washington, but to cry out against America for her wickedness." He pointed to Clinton's personal troubles as an indication of a greater sickness plaguing the country.

"America is under judgment," he told a crowd of more than 1,000 at Howard University in remarks carried on satellite television and over the Internet.

Recent disasters, including hurricanes, have come in response to the nation's sinful behavior, he said.

If Clinton truly humbled himself, Farrakhan predicted, "God would not let a storm touch the country for 90 days."

He urged his listeners to observe a day of atonement and seek to repent for their sins and reform themselves.

Farrakhan said he was stirred particularly to think about the nature of lying by the recent impeachment proceedings launched against Clinton in the Monica Lewinsky affair.

Referring to the biblical story of Adam, he called Clinton's linguistic denials of wrongdoing a "fig leaf" to try and cover his mistakes. But while Clinton may have lied, Farrakhan warned that those who have condemned him are not in a position to judge.

"The self-righteousness and hypocrisy of religious and political leaders is sickening," he said. "Is there any member of Congress that doesn't need washing?"

Congressional leaders themselves have lied to constituents by promising to protect their interests and are instead serving the needs of corporate America, he said.

And past presidents have committed far greater atrocities against their people than Clinton, Farrakhan said. He questioned whether Clinton's actions qualified as high crimes and misdemeanors, the standard necessary to warrant impeachment.

Farrakhan also criticized Independent Council Kenneth Starr, accusing him of entrapping the President and trying to weaken him. He said Starr's investigation and the graphic report it produced had taken its toll on the nation's well-being.

"You don't dump sewage into the water supply and expect the population to stay healthy," he said.

The Nation of Islam leader maintained he was not defending the President, but rather the truth. He offered reasons why God might have allowed Clinton "to be brought before the world in such a humiliating way."

The President's current situation illustrates how even the most powerful man in the world can be humbled, Farrakhan said. And Clinton also may use this opportunity to take not just political but spiritual leadership, if he seeks redemption, he added.

"The truth will free the President and the truth will free this nation," Farrakhan said.

Farrakhan organized the Million Man March in October of 1995, where he urged black men gathered from across the country to take responsibility for their actions and seek atonement for their sins.

Defendant's fiancée speaks out about dragging murder

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JASPER, Texas - One of three white men accused of dragging a black man to his death rejected a plea agreement because he wants to prove his innocence in court, according to the man's fiancée.

Shawn Berry, who could face the death penalty if convicted of capital murder, turned down an offer of a life sentence because he fears prison would be worse than dying by lethal injection, said his fiancée, Christie Marcontell.

Marcontell, who spoke Saturday with several newspapers, including the Houston Chronicle, said that if Berry goes to prison, "he's got both sides against him. He's got the white supremacists and the blacks against him."

Berry, John William "Bill" King and Lawrence Brewer are accused in the June 7 slaying of James Byrd Jr., who was chained to a pickup truck and dragged for nearly three miles along a rural road. Authorities allege they killed

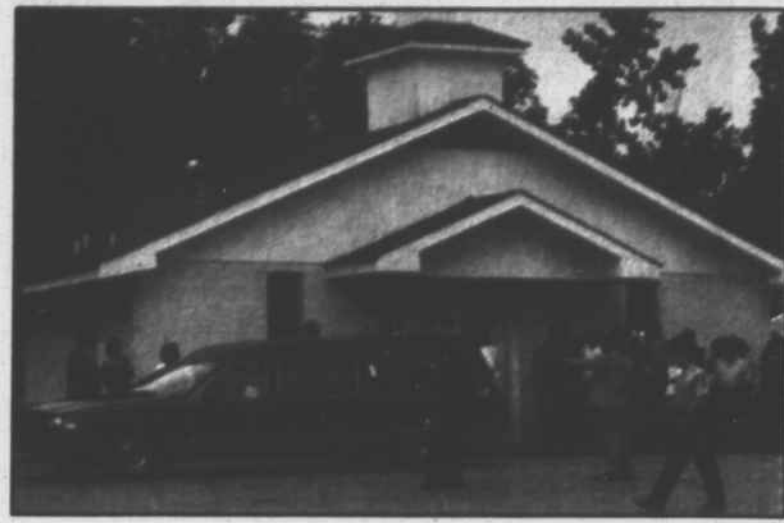
Byrd because of his skin color. All three are imprisoned awaiting trial, scheduled for Jan. 25.

Berry, 23, had cooperated with authorities after his arrest, telling them he watched from a distance while King, 23, and Brewer, 31, killed Byrd. But authorities say subsequent evidence, including blood found on Berry's shoes, shows he might actually have participated in the attack.

Berry's attorney, Joseph Hawthorn, acknowledged his client turned down a plea bargain. Jasper County District Attorney Guy James Gray has declined to comment on any discussions he may have had with Berry's lawyer.

Hawthorn arranged for Ms. Marcontell to speak with reporters after she expressed concern that Berry was being painted with the same brush as his co-defendants.

Marcontell, 22, the mother of Berry's 13-month-old son, said she visits Berry twice a week. However, she said she purposely avoids asking about the killing because she



Thousands gathered for the funeral of Robert Byrd in June. Byrd was dragged to in rural Jasper Texas.

wants to keep Berry's spirits up.

Berry also has not discussed the slaying with her, Marcontell said, except to say that "it was all Bill (King), and he pushed Russell into it."

But Stella Byrd, the mother of

the dead man, insists Berry is as guilty as his co-defendants.

"They found blood on his shoes. They know he was there," she said. "He's as guilty as the other ones."

Admission of race war will be used in serial killer's trial

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CINCINNATI - A taped confession that serial killer Joseph Paul Franklin later recanted will be used by prosecutors attempting to resolve the case of two black teen-agers who were shot to death 18 years ago.

Franklin, 48, has said he was trying to start a race war when he went on a killing spree in 1977.

Relatives of the two Cincinnati victims were to testify today. On Monday, a jury was seated in Hamilton County Common Pleas Court and was taken to a railroad trestle where police said Franklin, a white supremacist, lay in wait and used a high-powered rifle to kill the youths.

Franklin, already facing a death sentence in Missouri, could only be sentenced to life in prison if convicted here. Ohio did not have a death penalty when Franklin allegedly shot cousins Darrell Lane, 14, and Dante Evans Brown, 13, on June 8, 1980.

Franklin allegedly told prosecutors last year, "I did it ... I shot those dudes." He later contended that he made the incriminating statement because he was tricked by an attractive female prosecutor.

Hamilton County Prosecutor Joseph Deters plans to play a tape of the confession Franklin allegedly gave to Assistant Prosecutor Melissa Powers in April 1997.

In opening statements Monday, Deters told jurors that Franklin's confession includes details only the killer would know. It also includes comments about Franklin's career as a bank robber and chilling remarks about his plan to "cleanse the world of blacks," Deters said.

"Joseph Paul Franklin, in June of 1980, was robbing banks for a living and killing people for a hobby," Deters said. "Darrell Lane and Dante Evans Brown had the god-awful circumstance to cross paths with him."

Franklin has pleaded innocent by reason of insanity to two counts

of aggravated murder.

"He killed two kids, two kids who didn't have a chance to have a life," Brown's uncle, Gary Trumbo, said outside the courtroom Monday. "He's going around killing people not because of what they've done, but because of the color of their skin."

Judge Ralph Winkler is permitting Franklin to represent himself during the trial, along with his

court-appointed lawyer. But a request to move the trial from Cincinnati was denied.

Franklin has admitted to a series of racially motivated killings from 1977 to 1980. He is awaiting execution for the 1977 sniper slaying of a Jewish man outside a Missouri synagogue. He also received life sentences for killing an interracial couple in Madison, Wis., in 1977, and two black men in Salt Lake City in

1980.

Franklin has said he shot and wounded Vernon Jordan, then national president of the Urban League, in Fort Wayne, Ind., in 1980, and Hustler magazine publisher Larry Flynt in Georgia in 1978.

He was acquitted of wounding Jordan. Georgia prosecutors decided not to try Franklin in the shooting that left Flynt paralyzed.

Lee to lecture at Wake Forest

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Acclaimed African American filmmaker Spike Lee has spent the past 10 years bringing the stories of African Americans to the big screen.

On Nov. 3, Lee brings his cutting wit and intellect to Wake Forest University's Wait Chapel for a lecture on his works.

Tickets are \$5 and may be purchased at the door or charged by phone by calling 758-4869. Tickets may also be purchased in Benson University Center, Room 335.

The event is sponsored by the university's Student Union and

Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Lee's introduction to movie goers came in 1986 when his low budget eclectic "She's Gotta Have It" became one of the most talked about films of the year. Shot on a shoestring budget and financed mostly by credit cards, the movie launched Lee and his onscreen character, fast-talking-Nike-hawking "Mars Blackman" into orbit.

Since "She's Gotta Have It," Lee's 40 Acres and a Mule Filmworks has gone on to release a host of films including "Malcolm X," which garnered actor Denzel Washington, who starred as the slain civil rights leader, a nod for

an Academy Award for best actor.

Last year, Lee made history when he and a group of African American millionaires produced "Get on the Bus," one of the first movies to tell the story of the Million Man March.

Lee also produced the stellar documentary "Four Little Girls," one of the first to tell the story of four girls killed in the 60s bombing of a predominantly black Birmingham church.

Since his first movie, Lee has produced more than 10 major motion pictures, starred in 25 commercials and 35 music videos. He also has written several books.

Mathabane to lecture at West Forsyth

Special to THE CHRONICLE

Mark Mathabane, author of the bestselling autobiography "Kaffir Boy," will deliver a lecture to students at West Forsyth High School at 8:45 a.m. Wednesday.

Mathabane, who grew up under apartheid near Johannesburg, South Africa, describes the grinding poverty, hunger and terrifying police raids he experienced as a child in the overcrowded ghetto of Alexandra. To keep her children alive, his mother boiled cow blood to make soup and taught her son to eat leeches and scavenge for half-eaten sandwiches in the local dump. Mathabane witnessed murders and riots. At age 10, he contemplated

suicide.

Mathabane says that what saved him from self-destruction were his mother and the love of learning she instilled in him, though she herself had never been given a chance to attend school. During a riot, he risked his life to salvage a few books from a burning library. Education became his passport to freedom. It freed his mind and allowed him to dream of worlds beyond the bitter reality of black life under apartheid.

In September 1987, "Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa," reached No. 3 on The New York Times bestsellers list. The

book is still used in many American schools and is accepted in major textbooks. Mathabane has been writing and lecturing ever since, dedicated to inspiring young people to read, study, excel, believe in themselves and overcome any obstacles they may face. In 1996-97, he served as a White House Fellow at the Department of Education in Washington, D.C. While there, he helped implement the American Reads program, which helps American children read fluently by third grade.

Mathabane lives in Kernersville with his wife Gail and three children. He is completing his fifth book.

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