



Photo by The Associated Press
 Clara Taylor, left, and Mary Verrett, sisters of dragging death victim James Byrd Jr., react after John William King received a guilty verdict in his capital murder trial Tuesday in Jasper, Texas. King and two other men were accused of the 1998 killing.

Murder

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In his closing, defense attorney Brack Jones concentrated on the kidnapping argument.

He acknowledged a "terrible, terrible brutal horrendous death." "No question. The question is: Was Mr. Byrd kidnapped?"

Jones said he believed the tying of Byrd's feet and the dragging was the method of death and not intentional kidnapping.

"We say the tattoo evidence doesn't prove kidnapping," he said, referring to King's numerous racist tattoos.

"Mr. King's writings do not prove kidnapping," he said, referring to numerous letters King wrote about forming a new racist organization in Jasper.

Said King's other attorney, Haden "Sonny" Cribbs: "I don't deny he made some racial slurs. Not that I agree with that. But that is his right. You have a right to be a racist. Right or wrong, you still have that right. You have a right to even be a satanist, but that is our right."

A pathologist Monday testified Byrd was dragged alive and in excruciating pain along the bumpy county road. When the pickup swerved into a left-hand curve, Byrd's chained body swung to the right, where he was beheaded by a concrete culvert.

An ex-convict with dreams of starting his own racist group, King had been waiting for an opportunity to make a name for himself and his fledgling white supremacy group, the Texas Rebel Soldiers, prosecutors said.

While in prison, King told one inmate he wanted to "take a black out" to prove himself as a white supremacist. He covered himself in racist tattoos, his defense attorneys contended, to prevent attacks from the mostly black population at Beto.

The unemployed laborer's fondness for writing severely jeopardized his case. Before his letters surfaced, investigators had only a cigarette lighter and his DNA on cigarette butts to tie him to the crime scene.

But King revealed more information. In letters to co-defendant Lawrence Russell Brewer, he revealed that blood-stained clothing, missed by police, was still in his apartment. DNA tests showed the blood was Byrd's.

In a November letter to The Dallas Morning News, King admitted he had been riding in the truck with Brewer and the other co-defendant, Shawn Berry, on June 7 when they offered a ride to Byrd.

Until that letter, there were no witnesses to place King in the truck at the same time as Byrd. King insisted he had been taken home before Byrd was killed. But a letter to Brewer indicated otherwise.



Photo by The Associated Press
 District Judge Joe Bob Golden, left, reads the verdict in the capital murder trial of John William King Tuesday in Jasper, Texas. King was found guilty for the dragging death of James Byrd Jr.

Code sought to aid black broadcasters

FCC chair asks advertisers not to discriminate against minority stations

By JEANNINE AVERSA
 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - The advertising and broadcasting industries should come up with a voluntary code designed to make sure that advertisers don't discriminate against radio stations owned by or geared to minorities, government officials said today.

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Bill Kennard said the code would be based on a set of principles that include using accurate information about consumer purchasing practices, promoting fair competition and expanding opportunities for all Americans.

"These principles are few in number but draw on the many values which we cherish as a nation," Kennard said in a speech prepared for a conference of the American Advertising Federation in New York.

Kennard's proposal was endorsed by Vice President Al Gore, who said in remarks being delivered by satellite: "Diversity of voices and views is a pillar of our democracy. That is why we must ensure that our airwaves provide opportunities for all Americans."

The challenge responds to a report issued by the FCC last month that advertisers often bypass or pay less money to minority-owned radio stations or stations targeting black or Hispanic listeners. Clinton administration and commission officials said it is intended to be a "starting point" for advertisers and broadcasters to consider.

The report, written by the Civil Rights Forum on Communications Policy, a Washington-based advocacy group, recom-



April Blair, of WSMX - one of the city's two black-owned stations - spins gospel hits. Black radio stations face an uphill battle, says station owner Joe Watson. "Is it going to be hard", he said. Yes. But what isn't hard."

mended that industry adopt a code of conduct that requires decisions about buying ads to be based on market research.

Advertisers and broadcasters have been open to, but non-committal about, developing such a code. The American Advertising Federation, however, is assembling a panel to examine the feasibility of a code.

In his prepared remarks, Gore called on advertisers and advertising agencies "to make voluntary commitments demonstrating that they understand the value of diversity and the economic logic of serving minority consumers."

Gore also planned to announce the creation of an interagency working group that will examine advertising practice and their impact on minor-

ity broadcasters' and minority advertising agencies' ability to compete and thrive.

The FCC, the Federal Trade Commission, the Justice and Commerce departments and the Small Business Administration will be part of the working group.

The group is likely to conduct additional research - as Kennard has called for - on why advertisers are bypassing minority radio stations, officials said.

Anecdotal data in the FCC's report suggested that, in some cases, the

ad-buying process was guided by ethnic and racial stereotyping. But the report didn't pin down the reasons why some minority stations were being passed up by advertisers.

Many factors, however, could be responsible, including audience demographics, ratings or whether the radio station is owned by a company operating many stations, the report acknowledged.

In his speech, Kennard took note of the wider economic effects of depriving minority-oriented stations of ad revenues.

"To succeed on the Main Streets of tomorrow, Madison Avenue must recognize the reality of minority consumers and the power of minority-formatted stations in reaching them," he said. But he said listeners also suffer when they "find themselves bypassed by some of our biggest companies, on the outside looking in to our national marketplace."

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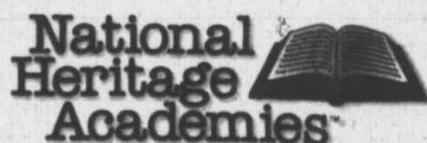
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