



## Dragging death killer to be kept isolation

By MARK BABINECK  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HUNTSVILLE, Texas — John William King's days on death row might be spent in isolation from both black and white inmates expected to have a score to settle with the racist killer.

King, 24, arrived on death row at the Ellis Unit around 4:30 p.m. Friday, one day after he was sentenced to die by lethal injection for helping to drag a black man to death behind a pickup truck last year.

All inmates who come to death row are kept apart from the other 443 condemned men until prison officials determine when — or if — they will be allowed to spend recreation time with others.

"Any newly arriving inmate on death row immediately goes to a single cell situation and will stay in that cell 23 hours a day," Texas Department of Criminal Justice spokesman Larry Fitzgerald said. "He'll get one hour of recreation a day and will be recreated alone. He will not have contact with any other inmates."

Since all death row inmates' work privileges were suspended after the unsuccessful escape attempt by seven condemned men last November, they only get one hour a day outside their cells in a recreation yard.

Prisoners' rights advocate Ray Hill, a proponent of the work program, said King might never be given such freedom, for his own protection.

"This guy is a flashpoint to some of the population on death row, so to keep Texas from having another Jeffrey Dahmer situation, they'll keep him in pretty close quarters," Hill said. Dahmer was the notorious Milwaukee serial child killer beaten to death by another inmate in 1994.

Texas death row inmates' only face-to-face contact with each other occurs in recreation yards about half the size of a basketball court.

"Inmates who are compatible, we allow them to recreate together in small groups," Fitzgerald said. "Those we consider to be needing protection or who could be dangerous to other inmates are recreated by themselves."

Prosecutors argued this week that King, who has dozens of racist tattoos, could be a threat to minorities behind bars. Similarly, the 187 black men on death row might want to avenge the June 1998 killing of James Byrd Jr. near Jasper.

Blacks aren't the only ones who have issues with King.

"What happened is that King made a claim when he was first brought into custody that he was a member of the Aryan Brotherhood," Fitzgerald said, referring to a white prison gang.

"Our investigation has revealed he was never a member. But as a result of making that claim, our gang intelligence people focused a lot of attention on the AB's that they did not want. He's not popular with the AB's."

If King remains segregated, he'll be able to talk with other inmates through cell bars but rarely will see them.

"Maybe he'd get a glimpse of an inmate being taken for a shower," Fitzgerald said. "It's not like he'd be sitting around in a sewing circle."

King's attorney, Brack Jones, noted his client's miserable prison prospects during closing arguments. He called King "a dead man walking" whether he got life in prison or the death penalty.

On average, new death row inmates can expect to spend six or seven years imprisoned before their appeals run out. A prisoner who chooses not to appeal could be executed in less than two years.

Hill fears that even in segregation, King could become a martyr for those who share his extreme beliefs.

"His isolation is going to have the ancillary effect of giving every other racist, Aryan nut a young, attractive role model," Hill said.

## Grisly Texas murder trial not a first 60 years ago, another black man was murdered by a King

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NORFOLK, Va. — For Ronald King, his adopted son's trial for dragging a black man to his death in Texas revived memories of his brother's murder trial 60 years ago in Norfolk.

Lawrence M. King, 19, and another young Marine said they killed a traveling salesman, but only after he made a pass and then attacked them for resisting. A jury acquitted the pair in 29 minutes during the Aug. 22, 1939, trial as a crowd outside cheered.

"It was a hate crime, too," Ronald King, 67, told The Dallas Morning News. "Course, they didn't have that word for it back then."

"There's a lot of similarities to this thing with Bill," said King, whose son John William King last week was sentenced to die for chaining James Byrd Jr. to a pickup truck and dragging him to his death. "Kinda eerie ones, really."

In both cases, the victims were disabled and 49, and the defendants were tied to the crimes by FBI lab work.

F. Teague Jennings, a member of a prominent Georgia family, arrived in Norfolk on July 24, 1939, on a business trip and checked into a hotel.

At 11 p.m., a bellboy heard moans coming from Jennings' room and found Jennings sprawled across a bloody bed, his head battered. Jennings died a few hours later.

Witnesses had seen two Marines accompany Jennings to his room. Fingerprints were found on two broken beer bottles in the room, and a Marine's khaki shirt, stained with blood, was pulled from the Elizabeth River.

Police checked the fingerprints of Marines in Norfolk but had no luck. Then, the FBI in Washington matched the prints to two Marines stationed with a regiment on the aircraft carrier USS Ranger: Lawrence King and Wallace E. Miller, 18.

The Marines said Jennings chatted with them as they stood in a doorway, seeking cover from a thunderstorm. Miller said Jennings invited them to have beer with him at a tavern, then come up to his hotel room, according to trial testimony from Detective Leon Notwitzky.

The Marines said they drank more beer in the room. Jennings stripped to his shorts and invited them to spend the night because of the rain.

Miller told Notwitzky he was in the bathroom when he heard a commotion and returned to find King and Jennings struggling.

Miller said he hit Jennings on the head with a beer bottle, and that

See Murder on A11

## Black scholar who fled country still looking for amnesty

By ALLEN G. BREED  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALBANY, Ga. — In the annals of the civil rights movement, Preston King isn't even a footnote. But to his family, he is an unfinished chapter.

In 1958, the local draft board refused to extend King's deferment to pursue his education. He had been granted time to get a master's degree at the prestigious London School of Economics and Political Science. But now, ready to pursue a doctorate, he was told to report for induction.

King, who is black, refused, accusing the all-white board of racism.

His proof? The board secretary's insistence on addressing him by his first name in correspondence — and a couple centuries of history.

"I have received government orders with which I cannot in principle comply due to an immediately conspicuous defect in form," he wrote in 1959 to the Selective Service's state headquarters. "And in the end I should rather sit in prison, or do whatever else, than submit — an act which I could never square with my conscience — to this reflection of a stupid and inane racialism in government."

In 1961, King was convicted of failing to report, and was sentenced to 18 months in federal prison.

The young man who had said he hoped to become a U.S. diplomat instead began a life outside the United States as a fugitive. He fled the country and, for the better part of four decades, has not dared return — even for the funerals of his parents and brother.

Today, the ambitious youth from this small south Georgia town is a renowned political philosopher and author in England, where his daughter, Oona King, is a member of Parliament.

Last year, she showed up in Georgia with a BBC television crew and instantly put her father's long dormant case back on the front burner — and Albany's segregated past on trial.

The file of King's trial had long ago been packed away, the hopeful 20-year-old face on his passport photo stamped "CANCELED." But now, the U.S. Department of Justice has ordered a copy to review.

Oona King and her American relatives are using her clout to push for a presidential amnesty. And so today's justice system has been called upon to decide whether King was a legitimate protester rejecting generations of humiliating denigration or just a spoiled academic who played the race card.

"This is kind of a cosmic joke," says King, now a goateed scholar with an Australian passport and an accent more British than American.

Albany is a city of 76,000 in the pecan- and peach-growing areas about 145 miles south of Atlanta. Once dominated by beef packing plants and cotton mills, the local economy is now driven by the likes of Procter & Gamble, Merck and Miller Brewing. Half the city's 76,000 residents are black, and blacks hold four of the six city commission seats.

It is a world away from the segregated Albany of King's childhood.

His father, Clennon W. King, a respected entrepreneur in the black community, would park his modest Chevrolet two blocks away when collecting rents from white tenants, so as not to appear too "uppity," Carol King, King's sister-in-law, remembers the humiliation of having to cover her hair with tissue paper before trying on hats at the local department store.

King's brother, Clennon Jr., applied for a place in the all-white University of Mississippi, instead of being considered, he was certified insane. When another brother, Paul, requested a college deferment in the early 1950s, the draft board informed him he didn't need to go to school.

Today, in his office at Albany State University, where he is a professor of English and modern languages, 67-year-old Paul King says, "It was a matter of the way people thought of blacks, that they were supposed to be more subservient and that they were supposed to think about agriculture or domestic work — things of that sort."

But the seven King boys were brought up to think differently.

Their father, who helped found the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and their mother, Margaret, a graduate of Tuskegee and Fisk universities, always encouraged them to go to college.

"So many people had been conditioned to think that they were less than others," Paul King says. "And Preston was a person who had been taught to soar, to do his best."

Preston King, the youngest child, was at historically black Fisk University in Nashville, Tenn., when he reported for the draft and received his first deferment. It was 1954, the year the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Brown Vs. Board of Education desegregated the public schools.

When Jacqueline Terry, secretary of Local Board No. 48 in Albany, wrote to him in November to inform him of reporting procedures, she began the letter, "Dear Sir."

Two years later, when King applied for permission to study abroad, he appeared in person. When Terry saw that he was black, he contends, she turned her back on him and was cool.

From then on, letters from the board were addressed, "Dear Preston."

While King says that rankled him, he did not make an issue of it until 1958, when his deferment was up.

He was traveling in Europe when the board notified him his deferment had expired. When he failed to respond to a second letter, Terry sent him an induction notice.

With a scholarship in hand to pursue a doctorate and the offer of a teaching position, King sent two quick letters in September 1958, apologizing for his tardy response and asking for more time. The board refused to reopen his case and ordered him back to Albany.

King exploded.

"In your correspondence with me, conducted in the name of the Board, you have adopted a style and tone which I consider quite frankly harsh and very nearly bullying," he wrote in October. "You have, too, been studiously discourteous, a fact illustrated by your practice of addressing me, a person you do not know, and in official correspondence, by my Christian name, and without a title."

King informed the board that "any such correspondence received by me shall simply be ignored, regardless of personal consequences."

Terry says the board was more than fair with King, granting him a two-year deferment when one year was the standard. As for her



Photo by The Associated Press

Carol King holds an old family photo in Albany, Ga., showing her brother-in-law, Preston King (seated left) along with his parents and six brothers. Preston King, 62, now lives in England after fleeing a draft evasion conviction in 1961, which he claims was based on racism.

manner of addressing him, she says her orders were to address all candidates by their first names, regardless of race.

"I was professional," says Terry, the only surviving member of that draft board.

King says he expected the board would be reprimanded. But when a colonel in Atlanta reviewed the case and ruled there was no discrimination, King dismissed it as merely rubber-stamping.

When King came home in 1960 to lecture and visit his family, he was arrested.

During his three-day trial in U.S. District Court at Albany, King's defense attorneys, including his brother C.B., sought to show that he did not willfully shirk his responsibility. They also tried

to prove discrimination.

But King offered no evidence that white candidates were addressed differently from blacks. There was no testimony about any white student being granted a deferment in similar circumstances. (The national military draft was discontinued in 1976, and Ms. Terry says all of the local board's records have been destroyed.)

King was released pending appeal but instead jumped his \$2,500 bond and returned to England — leaving behind a system that had B0040151 rejected what he saw as an offer to redeem itself.

"There is nothing legitimate about what was done in my case," he says from his office at Lancaster.

See Scholar on A8

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