



Clinton agrees with reference to him as 'black' president

WASHINGTON - President Bill Clinton agrees with author Toni Morrison: He is - unofficially - the nation's first black president. Clinton jokingly claimed that distinction for himself Saturday night at the Congressional Black Caucus' annual awards dinner. He said comedian Chris Tucker told him he'd like to see the Oval Office to prepare for an upcoming movie role as the nation's first black president. "I didn't have the heart to tell him that I've already taken the position," Clinton said. In an October 1998 essay in The New Yorker magazine, Morrison said black Americans tended to be sympathetic to Clinton because his impoverished childhood and personal struggles seemed to mirror many of their own experiences. "Years ago, in the middle of the Whitewater investigation, one heard the first murmurs: white skin notwithstanding, this is our first black president," she wrote. "Blacker than any actual person who could ever be elected in our children's lifetime."

Thousands of black men gather to pray for social change

WASHINGTON - An estimated 30,000 men, most of them black, gathered here for a three-day spiritual conference aimed at reaching out to those in prison. With some 100,000 prisoners watching via satellite hookup, the men at the MCI Center sang, shouted and prayed on Thursday. "Tell those men they will never be the same again," Bishop T.D. Jakes said of the prisoners. "There are some brothers out here praying for them." The conference, dubbed Manpower, is the brainchild of Jakes, a nationally known evangelist, who is pastor of the 22,000-member Potter's House Church in Dallas and is the author of several popular books and tapes. His CD, "Woman Thou Art Loosed," was nominated for a Grammy and a Dove Award last year.

One of the scheduled speakers was Surgeon General David Satcher. The conference had a special significance for black men, who have been plagued by incarceration and other social ills. The conference also comes at a time when more politicians - including Vice President Al Gore, Democratic front-runner in the presidential race, and Texas Gov. George W. Bush, the leading Republican in the race - have promoted faith-based institutions that address social ills. "Our focus will be on the principles that our nation's historical documents declare," Jakes said. "If we do not broaden our focus to embrace the contribution of faith-based entities addressing society's ills, we will squander this climate ripe for real change." The conference was interactive with inmates in three men's maximum security prisons - the Hughes Unit at Gatesville, Texas; Northeast Ohio Correctional Unit in Youngstown, Ohio; and California Rehabilitation Center in Norco, Calif., while more than 100 other prisons broadcast the program live.

States rewarded for reducing out-of-wedlock births

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Earlier this month Health and Human Services Secretary Donna E. Shalala announced that \$100 million in new bonuses were awarded to four states and the District of Columbia for achieving the nation's largest decreases in out-of-wedlock births between 1994-1997. The recipients will receive \$20 million each. The states to be honored are Washington, D.C., Alabama, California, Massachusetts and Michigan. Under the 1996 welfare reform law, \$100 million will be made available annually for the program. "The welfare reform law transformed the welfare system not only by requiring work and parental responsibility, but also by focusing on the reduction of out-of-wedlock and teen births," said Shalala. "This is an important way to help reduce the risk of welfare dependency, and we're pleased to be making this first award of bonuses to these states and the District of Columbia." The full list of states and the percentage change in out-of-wedlock birth rates is posted at www.acf.dhhs.gov/news/ooowstate.htm

Howard medical school receives grant for AIDS center

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently announced that Howard University College of Medicine will receive \$1.85 million to establish a National Minority AIDS Education and Training Center. With funding from the Congressional Black Caucus, the center will provide clinical training and education for minority HIV care providers nationwide. "This center offers great benefits to minorities who are disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDS," said Dr. Claude Fox, director of the HHS Health Resources and Services Administration. "Increasing the pool of HIV care providers is a critical step forward in improving the lives of people most affected by this epidemic." Working closely with other historically black colleges and universities schools of medicine, the center will offer clinical consultation to minority providers and give them access to information and resources that will standardize the treatment of HIV-positive individuals. The National Minority AIDS Education and Training Center is a part of a national network of AETCs that will operate in designated geographic locations. For information, call (301) 443-3376 or www.hrsa.gov/newsroom.

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This Week In Black History...
 Sept. 23, 1926 - North Carolina native John Coltrane is born in Hamlet. Coltrane will become a brilliant saxophonist and the father of avant-garde jazz.
 Sept. 24, 1957 - President Dwight Eisenhower sends 1,000 U.S. paratroopers to Little Rock, Ark., to desegregate schools. The troops will escort nine children to Central High School in the first federally supported effort to integrate public schools.
 Sept. 25, 1962 - Sonny Liston topples Floyd Patterson in the first round to become world.

White supremacist guilty in Byrd murder trial

BY C. BRYSON HULL
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRYAN, Texas - A second white supremacist was convicted Monday in the dragging death of a black man whose gruesome end shocked the nation. Lawrence Russell Brewer, 32, could get the death penalty for murdering James Byrd Jr. in the town of Jasper last year.

The jury of 11 whites and one Hispanic took just four hours to reach a verdict. Standing with his lawyers, Brewer showed no reaction. The judge had admonished spectators against any show of emotion. There was none.

The jury returned immediately to begin hearing testimony on whether Brewer should be sentenced to life in prison or death.

His former prison buddy John William King, 24, has been on death row since his February conviction in Byrd's slaying. A third man, Shawn Allen Berry, also 24, is awaiting trial next month.

Prosecutors said they believe the three men killed Byrd to promote their fledgling white supremacist organization - the Confederate Knights of America - and initiate Berry into the group.

The slaying was one of the grisliest racial crimes since the civil rights era.

Unlike the first trial, the case against Brewer was moved out of Jasper, 150 miles away, after the defense argued that the people of Jasper would be inclined to convict to redeem their small town in the eyes of the nation.

Brewer, sometimes sobbing, testified last week that he was with King and Berry when Byrd, 49, was chained by the ankles to the bumper of Berry's pickup and dragged for three miles along a rutted logging road and a bumpy asphalt route.



Mary Verrett, center, sister of James Byrd Jr., talks to reporters as members of the Byrd family stand behind her outside the Brazos County Courthouse Monday in Bryan, Texas. Lawrence Russell Brewer, the second of three white men charged with capital murder for the dragging death of James Byrd Jr., a black man, was convicted of capital murder Monday. Brewer could get the death penalty for his crime.

According to Brewer, he climbed inside the truck cab, smoked a cigarette and didn't realize Berry had chained Byrd to the back of the truck until they began driving. Brewer said he was convinced Byrd had died when Berry slashed his throat with a knife.

But a pathologist testified there was no evidence of a knife wound and no knife was found. Byrd was alive until his head was torn off when it slammed into a culvert, the pathologist said. And DNA evidence showed Byrd's blood on the shoes of all three men.

"Clearly there is a pattern of deceit," Jasper County District Attorney Guy James Gray said in his closing argument Monday. "Russell Brewer crafted his defense to stay just short of a capital offense. He's not afraid of the penitentiary."

In order to find Brewer guilty of capital murder, the jury was required to decide that Brewer helped kidnap Byrd as well as murder him.

Brewer's attorney, Doug Barlow, had told the jury: "If you think Russell was up here trying to concoct a story, don't you think he would have concocted a story that would have made him much less culpable?"

Progressive president calls for boycott of jails

During annual conference, Daniels calls for effort to keep black youths out of prison

BY DENISE ROLARK BARNES
THE WASHINGTON INFORMER

The Progressive National Baptist Convention closed its last convention of the century in Washington, D.C. recently with a news conference held outside a Washington, D.C. jail.

Flanked by ministers from across the nation, convention President Rev. C. Mackey Daniels announced the convention's initiative to stop the incarceration and killing of black youths.

"We cannot afford to enter into the new millennium ... worrying about our sons and our daughters," Daniels said. "Today, we are concerned about our children not being educated but rather being incarcerated. There is a mean police force that cares nothing about African American boys and girls ... (a police force) that will shoot us down in the street even before they question us."

Daniels called upon PNBC's 2.5 million members, representing more than 2,000 churches around the world, to plan marches on local city halls, county governments and state legislatures to demand an end to a government policy that invests "\$45 million to incarcerate (black youths) but (is) not willing to pay \$5,000 a year to educate one."

He also called upon representatives of other religious denominations, fraternities and sororities to join the campaign.

The Revs. Major Jemison, T. DeWitt Smith, Fred Lofton, Tyrone Pitts, Hycle Taylor, Otis Moss, Wallace Charles Smith, Morris Shearin and Trina Winfrey joined Daniels at the news conference.

They were urged to go back to their respective churches and implement the Training Starter Manual, a PNBC pamphlet designed to assist churches in launching the boycott.

"We must march in order to bring (government spending and priorities) back in balance and make sense out of no sense," Daniels said.

Justice Department statistics show that the number of prisoners in America has tripled over the last decade from 500,000 to 1.8 million with minority communities representing 70 percent of all new admissions.

According to a report released this year by the Justice Policy Institute, a project of the Center on

Juvenile and Criminal Justice, in 1996 there were 193 white American prison inmates for every 100,000 whites; 688 Hispanic prison inmates per 100,000 Hispanics and 1,571 African American prison inmates per 100,000 African Americans.

"This means that blacks are now imprisoned at eight times the rate of whites and Latinos are imprisoned at three and one-half times the rate of whites," the report stated.

It also noted that no state gov-

See **Boycott** on A9

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BLAIR WITCH PROJECT (R)	1:30 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
THE HAUNTING (PG-13)	1:00 4:00 7:00 9:30
BOPFENGER (PG-13)	1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:45
INSPECTOR GADGET (PG)	1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30
CHILL FACTOR (R)	1:30 4:00 7:10 9:40
UNIVERSAL SOLDIER (R)	6:00 9:45
BROKEDOWN PALACE (PG-13)	1:30 7:00

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THE SIXTH SENSE (PG-13)	1:00 4:00 7:00 9:30
DOG PARK (R)	1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30
BLUE STREAK (PG-13)	1:15 3:15 5:15 7:15 9:15
JAKOB THE LIAR (R)	1:15 4:15 7:15 9:40
MUMFORD (R)	1:30 4:00 7:00 9:15
RUNAWAY BRIDE (PG)	1:30 4:00 7:00 9:30

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 DOUBLE JEOPARDY (R) 5:00 6:30 7:30 9:45
 A STRIP OF ECHORS (R) 1:30 4:00 7:05 9:40
 THE SIXTH SENSE (PG-13) 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:45
 BOPFENGER (PG-13) 1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:45
 TEACHING MRS. TINGLE (PG-13) 1:15 3:15 5:15 7:15 9:15
 LETHAL WEAPON (R) 7:00 9:30
 MISKEY BLUE EYES (PG-13) 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:45
 STIGMATE (R) 1:00 3:25 7:00 9:45
 LOVE OF THE GAME (PG-13) 1:30 4:00 7:00 9:30

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JAKOB THE LIAR (R)	1:15 4:15 7:15 9:40
DOUBLE JEOPARDY (R)	1:30 4:00 7:00 9:15

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 BLUE STREAK (PG-13) 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
 A STRIP OF ECHORS (R) 1:30 4:00 7:15 9:45
 DEEP BLUE SEA (R) 1:30 4:30 7:10 9:50
 RUNAWAY BRIDE (PG) 1:30 4:00 7:05 9:30
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