

# News at a glance

## Local activists not ready to boycott Columbus businesses over shooting

COLUMBUS, Ga. (AP) — Local black activists say they are not ready to heed Rev. Jesse Jackson's call for a boycott of Columbus businesses over the city's handling of a fatal shooting involving a white deputy and a black motorist.



Walker

Several local black community activists said last Thursday they will support Jackson's call for disinvestment in city-based businesses only if city officials don't meet their demands first.

The activists did not set a deadline for the city to address their call for evidence in the Kenneth Walker shooting to be resubmitted to a grand jury.

Last month, a grand jury opted not to indict former Muscogee County sheriff's deputy David Glisson on criminal charges related to Walker's Dec. 10, 2003, death.

Walker, 39, was shot during a traffic stop that was part of a drug investigation. No drugs were found in the car he was in. Glisson was fired after the shooting.

A federal civil suit has been filed against the county by the victim's family.

Jackson called for people across the country to pull their money out of financial institutions based in Columbus until the man who shot Walker is federally prosecuted and Georgia adopts anti-racial profiling legislation.

But the Rev. Wayne Baker, president of the city's Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, said last Thursday that Jackson's call was ill-timed. At the same time, he said the local community is united in its goal to pursue justice for Walker and Walker's family.

## State agrees to review 1951 murder of Florida civil rights leader

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — The state will review the unsolved murders of two civil rights leaders killed when a bomb exploded beneath their home on Christmas Day more than a half-century ago, Florida's attorney general said last week.

The move by the department's Civil Rights Division comes after the Brevard County chapter of the NAACP asked that the criminal investigation into the unsolved deaths of Harry and Harriett Moore in 1951 be reopened.

The case previously was reinvestigated in the 1990s under the administration of Gov. Lawton Chiles.

The Moores, registered black voters, opposed school segregation and sought higher salaries for teachers. No one was ever held responsible for the bomb that went off under their home in Mims, in Brevard County on Florida's east coast.

Bill Gary, president of the North Brevard branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said he hopes technological advances, such as DNA evidence, may aid the investigation but acknowledged that the likelihood of identifying the killers is slim.

## BYU study confirms that Oprah's picks are good as gold

PROVO, Utah (AP) — A new study confirms what many already knew: Oprah Winfrey's book endorsements are good as gold to publishers.

"Oprah's recommendations had a bigger impact on the sales of books than anything we have previously seen in literature, or seen since," said Brigham Young University economics professor Richard Butler, whose findings were published in the latest issue of the journal Publishing Research Quarterly.

Butler found that Winfrey's recommendation was enough to lift books from obscurity and to keep them on the best-seller lists longer than other titles.

Using USA Today's weekly 150-item best-seller list, Butler and his team of students went about examining the 45 nonchildren's titles Winfrey picked from her book club's inception in 1996 until she announced its end in 2002.

Of those books, only 11 had been on the best-seller list before her recommendation, and none of them had gone beyond No. 25. Of the first 11 books that Winfrey picked, all went to at least No. 4 within a week, Butler said.

## D.C. murders down

WASHINGTON (Washington Afro/NNPA) — The 2004 murder rate for the District of Columbia decreased for the second consecutive year with 189 homicides recorded as of Dec. 20. Last year this time, there were 238 homicides. The reduction of 49 murders represents a 20.6 percent decrease. With only a few more days left in the year, police officials were claiming a victory.

"This shows that our department is doing what it takes to keep the numbers down and our streets safe," said Lt. William Farr, homicide division.

Of the 189 homicides, 62 victims were black males in their 20s. That represented the highest number of murder victims. Thirty-three murder victims were in their teens. In January, 10-month-old Jeniya Myles became one of the youngest homicide victims for 2004 when she died from blunt head impact trauma. Martha Byrd, 78, was the oldest victim, murdered by strangulation.

According to Metropolitan Police Chief Charles Ramsey, there are still 4,400 unsolved murders on the books since 1969. "At least 90 percent of these cases are solvable if witnesses would come forward," said Ramsey. This year's homicide closure rate is 58 percent.

Police officials also indicated to close more cases in an expeditious manner would require the District to invest funds in a fully operational forensic lab. Currently, D.C. sends lab requests to the FBI, which in most cases takes months to get results.

There were also 31 traffic fatalities that included accidents ranging from speeding; losing control of the vehicle falling into the river, crashing into trees, poles; or not placing children in child restraint seating.



Ramsey

# Reward offered in '64 murders

BY SHELIA BYRD  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JACKSON, Miss. — The Mississippi Religious Leadership Conference believes a \$100,000 reward will motivate someone to reveal secrets kept since 1964 when three young men were abducted and executed in Neshoba County for helping blacks register to vote.

The reward, an anonymous donation, will be administered by the MRLC, an interracial, interfaith organization created 40 years ago in response to black church bombings and the slayings of James Chaney, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman.

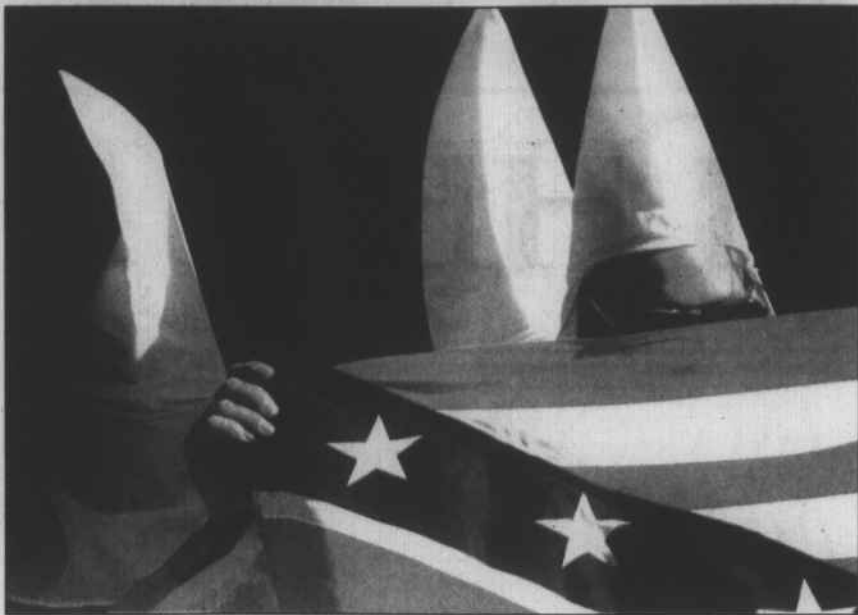
But is \$100,000 enough money to pry open the mouths of those who can pinpoint the perpetrators of the crime?

"I suppose it would help. Money always does. People like that are always looking for something like that," Caroline Goodman, the mother of Andrew Goodman, said in a telephone interview from her New York home.

Seven members of the Ku Klux Klan were convicted of federal civil rights violations in the deaths and sentenced to prison terms ranging from three years to 10 years. The state never brought murder charges, and none of those convicted served more than six years.

The Rev. Paul Jones, executive director of the MRLC, said the reward comes at a time when the state is gaining momentum in its quest for closure in the murders.

In June a multiracial task force organized a well-attended 40th anniversary commemoration of the slayings in Philadelphia. And Mississippi Attorney



File Photo

Members of the Ku Klux Klan are believed responsible for the killings.

General Jim Hood recently said a reopened investigation of the case will conclude by early next year.

If there is enough evidence for murder charges, it will be presented to a grand jury.

Hood has said his office was interviewing as many people as possible; the passage of time has made that difficult.

"We can only hope and pray that after 40 years that not only would the amount of money, but a change of heart and attitude will bring forth somebody that has knowledge of what transpired," Jones said.

Steve Wilkerson, a member of the Philadelphia Coalition that organized the June event, was a 12-year-old at the time of the murders.

Wilkerson, a lifelong

Philadelphia resident, said the reward and the coalition's efforts show that some Mississippians want justice, but he has doubts about whether a reward will uncover new evidence.

"If somebody is sworn to secrecy, that might not even make them bat an eye," Wilkerson said. "It could open up the conversation avenues and get people talking about it. The more people talk, the more opportunity there is to get somebody to say what they may not (have) intended to say."

In 1964 Chaney, Goodman and Schwerner were Freedom Summer volunteers.

Chaney, a 21-year-old black man, was from Meridian. Goodman, 20, and Schwerner, 24, were from New York, and among hundreds of mostly white college stu-

dents who came to Mississippi to educate blacks and help them to vote.

The three were going to Mt. Zion United Methodist Church just outside Philadelphia to investigate a fire the night they were murdered.

They were stopped by Neshoba County deputies but released. They were stopped again by the Klan. The three were beaten and shot to death; their bodies were found later in an earthen dam.

"If there are people who participated in these murders who haven't been punished, they have had 40 years of unjustified freedom," said MRLC attorney Wayne Drinkwater. "I think a continued nonprosecution of this case by the state is a stain on the honor of the state."

# Mfume says Bush wants to improve relations

BY GEORGE E. CURRY  
NNPA EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

WASHINGTON — Outgoing NAACP President Kweisi Mfume says President Bush is baffled over his inability to win broad support from African-Americans in last month's presidential election and appears determined to improve his poor standing in the black community.

Mfume, whose nine-year tenure with the NAACP culminates at the end of this week, met with Bush and his top political adviser, Karl Rove, for 45 minutes last week in the Oval Office. In an interview with the NNPA News Service that lasted as long as his meeting with Bush, the civil rights leader gave a detailed account of his White House meeting. It took place on the same day as an explosion at a U.S. base near Mosul killed 22 people, most of them Americans.

"I said to him at the beginning of the meeting, 'Look we can put this off and do it at a later time because this is urgent,'" Mfume recalled. "He said, 'I know. It's distressing me, but I want to have this meeting, and I want to have it today. So let's go ahead.'"

Mfume said he made it clear to Bush that their meeting was not a substitute for meeting with the leadership of the NAACP and that he saw it as a first step toward repairing the strained relationship between the president and the nation's largest and oldest civil rights organization.

Board Chair Julian Bond has been particularly acerbic in his attacks on Bush. In 2001 he accused Bush of representing the "Taliban" wing of the Republican Party, and the following year, he accused Bush of peddling "snake oil."

Mfume's meeting with Bush was in response to a letter he had sent to Bush after the election

seeking a meeting to set aside past differences.

"The bulk of the conversation centered on race relations — where we are and where we aren't and his belief that he has gone beyond other presidents of modern times or, for that matter, forever, in terms of the number of African-Americans and Latinos that are

placed, not only in his cabinet but all the jobs below the cabinet level and that it's kind of strange that that does not equate itself into a large vote on Election Day," Mfume said.

Bush has refused to meet with the CBC since early in his first term and became the first sitting president not to address an

NAACP convention since Warren Harding in the early 1920s.

Mfume says now that Bush has met with him, the NAACP needs an overture toward the president.

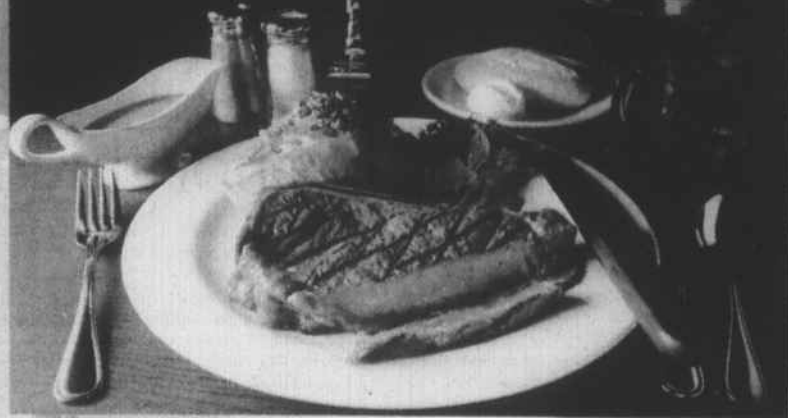
"If the association wants to keep this thing going, diplomatically, they have to send a signal," he said.



Mfume

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