



Media called racist in Brown case coverage

Demonstrators assault abortion clinic director

WICHITA, Kan. — Police arrested 54 anti-abortion protesters for blockading an abortion clinic that opened unexpectedly Sunday and two others who allegedly roughed up the clinic director. Debbie Riggs, director of Wichita Family Planning Inc., was pushed and shoved by two protesters at the clinic's back entrance when she arrived at 7:30 a.m. to open the clinic, said Deputy Police Chief Steve Trainer. "She was physically roughed up, but she wasn't injured," Trainer said. "She was a little shaken." Two patrol officers responded to a call from Riggs. They were surrounded as they tried to leave the clinic and felt threatened, so one of the officers sprayed Mace tear gas on some protesters, Trainer said. The two demonstrators who scuffled with Riggs were arrested on suspicion of assault, police said. About 100 anti-abortion protesters

gathered at the clinic Sunday morning before the clinic's staff arrived, police said. By mid-morning, police had filled two vans with detained protesters.

Yugoslavian planes blast targets in Croatia

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia — Army jets, tanks and gun ships battered Croatian positions Sunday in some of the harshest attacks yet in the breakaway republic. News reports said at least 18 people had died. Fighting has escalated between Croatia's forces and army-backed ethnic Serb militiamen opposed to secession, and Croatian officials have threatened even more attacks unless federal soldiers withdraw. Radio Zagreb said Serb guerrillas and federal troops were trying to take a town, and described the fighting as the heaviest involving the federal military since Croatia declared independence June 25.

—The Associated Press

By Lauren Chesnut
Staff Writer

After a member of the Durham City Council contended that "there is an insidious racial nature" to the media's "attack" on accused council member Clarence Brown, community leaders and a UNC professor offered mixed opinions as to the validity of the charge. Durham City Council member Diane Wright voiced the contention about the media's bias in last Monday's council meeting. Brown is the Durham city council member and N.C. Central University assistant professor who admitted to double-billing both the city and NCCU for travel-related expenses. Brown has also been accused by his wife of carrying on extra-marital affairs and of using drugs. Attorney Darryl Smith accused the Durham Herald-Sun of printing unsubstantiated allegations and of being sensationalistic in general, criticizing especially what he sees as its "sensational bias in their coverage of people

and institutions in the African-American community.... "I share the view of many folks that they are often worse in matters with a racial angle or will even interject a racial angle into issues where that may not be necessary," he said. Smith feels the paper thereby does a disservice when it "polarizes racial relations" in the Durham community. UNC's Chuck Stone, a black journalism professor, sees validity in several perspectives on the issue of racism in media coverage. He criticized first and foremost the Herald-Sun's "lack of precision" in its coverage of Brown. "They grouped his legal transgressions with his ethical peccadillos, and they're not the same thing," he said. Stone said allegations of media racism reminded him of Samuel Johnson's comment that patriotism is the last refuge of scoundrels. "That also applies to racism," he said. "I'm not suggesting that (Brown) is a scoundrel, but he resorts to this when he can't explain why this is happening." Regarding coverage of Brown's prob-

lems, Smith said, "I think that when an individual is a public official or public figure that they are subjected to closer scrutiny by the news media, and I think it's appropriate to report on improper activity by a public official in performance of their duties." Clearly, the matter of the double-billing for travel expenses is appropriate for reporting, he said. But the "sordid details of the dissolution of a marriage" are another matter, Smith said. He said many of the allegations made in Prattsie Cunningham-Brown's divorce lawsuit were not required for that type of pleading but were added as a play to the media. Relentless dissection of politicians' improprieties is characteristic of "the whole history of investigative journalism — Watergate and exposing the frauds and the phonies and the elected officials who rip off the people," Stone

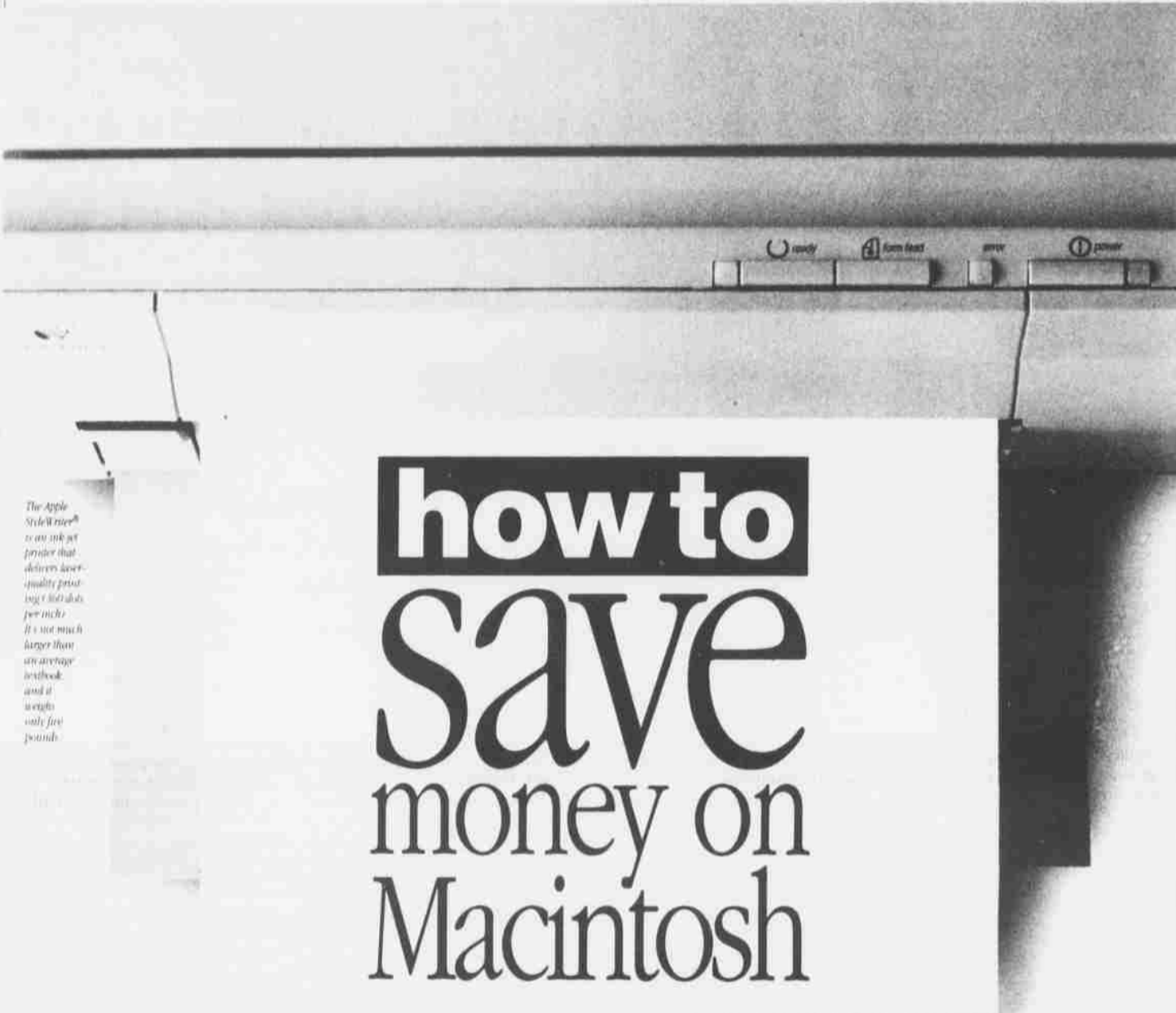
said. "That wasn't pursued because of race. It was pursued because they were giving a man power. Brown has power, and he has misused his power," Stone said. Stone said he does believe the media's scrutiny of Brown is more intense than it might have been if he were a white politician, adding, "There is an undercurrent of 'We gotta teach this nigger a lesson.'" Former Durham Mayor Wib Gulley agreed with Smith in his criticism of what he characterized as the Herald-Sun's "rush-to-judgment" editorial stance. He added, however, "In my experience, (race) has not made any difference. I've seen rushes to judgment - white, black, male, female. There certainly are cases where they are quicker to rush to judgment than others, but it doesn't seem to turn on race or gender ground," he said.

Hurricane's light damage not a constant for storms

By Anna Griffin
Staff Writer

Luckily for N.C. beachfront property owners, Hurricane Bob never reached its full destructive potential when it swept through the state last week. But the light damage here may leave people with a false sense of security the next time a storm hits the coast, officials at the National Weather Service said. Hurricanes are frequent this time of year, often brewing and then embarking on their paths of destruction so quickly that property owners have little time to secure their beach homes and boats. Hurricane Hugo, which stayed along the eastern seaboard during its entire trip north in 1989, caused a billion dollars in damage to North Carolina alone. The problems in predicting hurricane damage are great, typically because the behavior of any given hurricane is unpredictable, said Chris Kzcieki of the National Hurricane Service. "Sometimes you just get lucky with hurricanes," Kzcieki said. "We do everything we can to predict where and when they will strike, but like nature itself, they are so incredibly hard to predict." As of Saturday, Bob was responsible for 16 deaths nationwide and over 2 million power outages. Hurricane Bob — transformed into a mellowed Tropical Storm Bob — was seen heading north and quickly wearing itself out. Bob hit the Carolinas on Aug. 18, one day after it first made its presence known in the United States. The Outer Banks, as well as some beaches in South Carolina, sustained minimal damage by heavy winds and rain as Bob brushed land. "We were sitting in the living room when it hit," said Sandy Davis, owner of a beach house at North Myrtle Beach, S.C. "All of our windows were broken by the winds, and we were real lucky the power was out, because if it wasn't, the air conditioner would have blown." "Looking up and down the street I saw a couple of fires and a lot of windows that the wind had cracked," Davis said. Bob's last minute shift eastward, a move that spared North Carolina, probably saved the state millions of dollars in damage, according to Wallace

DeMaurice, head of the National Weather Service's Cape Hatteras bureau. After brushing North Carolina, the hurricane moved northward past Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey, bringing with it torrential rain and heavy winds. Fortunately for residents, the storm remained about 100 miles east of the coast during the trip northward. On Tuesday the eye of the storm crossed land at Block Island, R.I., pulling up power lines, breaking windows and making roads virtually impassable, said Rod Gonski of the National Weather Service's Raleigh-Durham International Airport Bureau. As it moved north toward the Canadian border, Bob's high winds ravaged parts of Massachusetts and Maine, leaving millions of dollars in damage. A hurricane is a violent tropical swirling of winds around a center of low atmospheric pressure, according to the National Hurricane Center at Coral Gables, Florida. This windstorm, which must sustain winds of over 74 mph to be classified as a hurricane, can cause torrential rains, incredibly high winds, small electrical storms and even mini-tornadoes. Most hurricanes that hit the United States begin as small tropical storms in the Caribbean and South Pacific and grow larger because of changes in the atmospheric pressure around them. The jet stream and the winds of the storm usually push it northward, where it eventually loses steam and becomes a tropical storm again as accompanying winds drop below 74 mph. In the recent case, Hurricane Bob was downgraded to a tropical storm just nine hours after hitting Rhode Island. Besides Hurricane Hugo, the United States has been extremely lucky over the past decade. In 1985, meteorologists predicted Hurricane Gloria would cause billions of dollars in damage, but like Bob, at the last minute the storm changed direction and moved away from the coast. The largest hurricanes to hit the eastern seaboard were the 1935 Labor Day hurricane, which hit the Florida Keys on the popular holiday and killed 600 and 1969's Hurricane Camille, which hit the Mississippi coast, killing 256, Kzcieki said.



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