

NEWS CLIPS

JUDGE REVOKES SUGE KNIGHT'S PROBATION

Probation was revoked earlier this month for rap music executive Marion "Suge" Knight because of his role in a brawl at the MGM Grand Hotel. Hours after the fight rap star Tupac Shakur was gunned down in Knight's car off of the Strip. The 31-year-old Knight said he had intervened to break up the brawl but a Superior Court judge decided Knight was the aggressor. The Death Row Records president faces up to nine years in prison for violating probation in a 1992 assault case. Knight will remain in jail until he is sentenced Feb. 28. Knight had plead no contest in 1995 to assaulting two rappers at a Hollywood recording studio. Prosecutors said Knight pulled a gun and fired a warning shot toward one of the rappers. He was placed on probation. He is also accused of violating probation in a 1994 firearms trafficking conviction in U.S. District Court. A hearing on that case is set for Dec. 16.

GERONIMO PRATT HAS DECEMBER 16 HEARING ON NEW TRIAL REQUEST

Former Black Panther Party leader Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt has a Dec. 16 hearing scheduled in Santa Ana on his request for a new trial. "It's clear that this is not a typical case. It cries out for resolution," said Orange County Superior Court Judge Everett W. Dickey last month when he granted the hearing. Pratt, 49, was convicted in 1972 of shooting Caroline Olsen to death and critically wounding her husband during an \$18 tennis court robbery. He has served 25 years in prison. Pratt has maintained he was in Oakland at a party meeting when the crimes happened and that he was framed by the FBI, which was out to destroy him and the Panthers as part of its notorious counterintelligence program, COINTELPRO.

OAKLAND NAACP INVESTIGATES RACISM CHARGES AGAINST UPS

The Oakland chapter of the NAACP is investigating whether black United Parcel Service workers are subjected to racial discrimination. Executive Director Shannon Reeves said he was looking into worker accusations that the company assigns black employees to routes in higher-crime areas than whites. In the last year, four drivers have been robbed and another was beaten to death in June 1995. UPS spokesman Tom Pizzuti denied the accusations, saying that seniority, not race, is the determining factor in assigning routes. He also said the company was working to improve safety for its drivers.

BCC AND NASA START SCIENCE PARTNERSHIP

Bethune-Cookman College and NASA recently signed a \$1.5 million grant award that calls for the college to operate the Educator's Resource Center at the Kennedy Space Center. The grant gives Bethune-Cookman a key role in helping NASA expose students and educators to real-world science through space-related teaching resources and hands-on teaching experiences with the goal of inspiring students to choose careers in mathematics, science and technology.

WARNING ON AIR DANGERS OVER AFRICA

The dangers of a major air tragedy over Africa are back in the spotlight with reports that African airlines have joined pilots in condemning air routes over the continent. The African Airlines Association have formally complained that air routes are hazardous and have predicted that the situation will continue to deteriorate unless urgent action is taken. The AAA says the governments of the countries concerned are to blame because they are not enforcing internationally accepted minimum safety standards as required by the International Civil Aviation Organization. This condemnation of African air safety by the continent's airlines comes in the wake of recent warnings by international aviation groups that they may urge airlines to re-route aircraft around countries that fail conform to international air traffic control standards.

SOUTH AFRICA UNVEILS MORE FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Coca Cola Canners of Southern Africa (CCSA) recently unveiled its state-of-the-art, 2,000 cans-per-minute factory complex in Germiston on the eastern periphery of Johannesburg. It is the only such facility on the continent and the biggest in the southern hemisphere and it is being viewed as a nod by foreign investors to South Africa's improving business climate. The Coca Cola company owns 51 percent of CCSA, the remaining shares being owned by eight local independent bottlers. Since the 1994 all-race elections, American companies have been entering the country at a rate of nearly four a month.

Conspiracy to kill Ron Brown questionable

By David Hefner
Special to Sentinel-Voice

An intriguing Pelican Brief-style theory has recently surfaced claiming that the death of former U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown was no accident, but rather a plan concocted by top government officials in order to permanently distance President Clinton from Brown's alleged governmental misconduct.

The theory, which is chronologically outlined in a 20-page document titled, "Murder in the First Degree," claims Clinton knew of the plot to "mysteriously" assassinate Brown.

The document asserts that top Clinton administrators, with the help of top Croatian officials,

conspired to assassinate Brown because of the embarrassment his ongoing legal battles caused the Administration and the adverse impact the legal battles would have on Clinton's reelection.

According to Nicholas A. Guarino, author of the document and editor of the Arkansas-based newspaper, The Wall Street Underground, an inside U.S. agent named "Eye Three" leaked the story. Furthermore, Guarino said "two dozen" other government officials and military personnel gave information supporting the conspiracy allegations.

All sources spoke on condition of anonymity. To date, these conspiracy charges have not been supported.

On April 3, Brown and 34 American business people were killed after their Air Force CT-43 plunged into a mountain near Dubrovnik, Croatia. The plane was leaving from Tuzla, Bosnia on its way to Croatia.

The tragic crash immediately caused many to raise questions of incompetence on the part of the Air Force pilots who were flying the plane.

Nevertheless, early news coverage suggested that bad weather was a major cause for the crash.

After an unusually long four month investigation, 16 Air Force officers were "reprimanded" on Aug. 6 in connection with the accident. All of the officers were temporarily stripped of their commands, including a three star



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general and a colonel.

However, according to reports compiled by Guarino, the weather was not bad in Croatia. Additionally, Guarino contends that it is highly bizarre for Air Force pilots to travel 1.6 miles off course without knowing it. Guarino says these inconsistencies, along with others, support allegations of a conspiracy.

Consequently, Guarino's theory claims that the plane was purposely lead off course by the maintenance chief at Croatia's Cilipi Airport. Guarino claims the chief, Niko Jerkuic, purposely misnavigated the plane, leading it to its ultimate demise. According to Guarino, this plot was achieved by giving the Air Force pilots the wrong non-directional radio (NDR) signals. The NDR signal, or "beacon," as Guarino calls it, was essentially the compass that the Air Force pilots were to follow for navigational instructions.

Based on the document, Jerkuic was supposed to receive a large sum of money for successfully disposing of Brown. Days later, however, Jerkuic was found dead with gunshot wounds to the chest, Guarino's document

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Feud over John Wayne resurfaces

LOS ANGELES — John Wayne — a symbol of rugged individualism or blind bigotry?

For the second time in three months, an image of the late movie star has become snarled in a web of racial and labor tensions within the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

A union grievance was filed last week by a white firefighter who claims a black battalion chief harassed him for displaying a 6-foot cardboard cutout of Wayne in the recreation room of the Palmdale station.

Some in the department say the issue really reflects strife between union and management as well as white resentment of affirmative action in the department.

"This is bigger than John Wayne," said Brent Burton, a member of the Stentorians, an association of black firefighters. "This is union-management and race."

Some black firefighters consider Wayne a bigot because of a 1971 Playboy magazine interview in which he said blacks were incapable of handling leadership roles.

"I believe in white supremacy until the blacks are educated to a point of responsibility," Wayne,

then 63, told the writer.

Backers of the Duke consider him an icon of American individualism — the kind of guy who would not be pushed around by a boss.

Dozens of posters and cutouts have cropped up at county fire-houses since the first dispute over a Wayne image erupted in September, a union official said.

The Wayne feud may represent deeper morale problems, acknowledged Fire Chief P. Michael Freeman. The chief said he has set up panels of firefighters and outside consultants to deal with the issue.

The controversy began when Battalion Chief Daniel Scott, who is black, infuriated many firefighters by removing a photo of Wayne that had hung for 20 years at a Carson fire station.

Freeman later had the picture reinstated, but the firefighters' union filed a grievance that claimed he exceeded his authority. The second incident occurred on Oct. 13 after Capt. Al Schriver placed a life-sized cutout of Wayne at the station in Palmdale. Battalion Chief Ollie Linson, who is black, questioned him about the image but allowed it to remain, Schriver said.

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Timothy Williams is a member of the Nevada & Illinois State Bar, practicing primarily in personal injury cases.

COMBINED 27 YEARS OF LEGAL EXPERIENCE

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