

NEWS CLIPS

NATIONAL BAPTIST LEADER RECEIVES DEATH THREATS, HATE MAIL

The Rev. Henry Lyons, president of the National Baptist Convention USA Inc., was targeted for assassination, newspaper reports confirmed recently. The *St. Petersburg Times* reported that Dale Lynn Hutchins, 52, paid a man he met at a doughnut shop \$1,120 to shoot and kill Lyons. The would-be hit man returned the money two days later and at the urging of friends called police. Hutchins has since been arrested and taken to Pinellas County Jail and charged with solicitation to commit murder. The report said that there is no indication that Hutchins, who is white, had any contact with Lyons beyond the avalanche of media reports since his wife was charged with setting fire to a Florida beach front home allegedly owned by Lyons and Bernice Edwards, the public relations director for the Convention. Hutchins is reported to have no known connection to any white supremacy groups. Lyons has also received several other death threats and hate mail after newspapers in Tennessee and Detroit published his home phone number and address.



LYONS

The Alpha Educational Foundation of Phoenix, Inc., a non-profit organization, is sponsoring the third annual Men of Color Conference, Oct. 3-4, at the Phoenix Civic Center in Phoenix, Ariz. Honorary co-chairs are the Rev. Louis H. Sullivan, founder of the Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC), and Raul H. Castro, former U.S. Ambassador. The theme for the event: "Building on Our Tradition of Excellence." Organizers say the conference will seek to encourage the attendees to assume greater responsibility for helping themselves, their families and their communities. On Oct. 3, the focus will be on corporate issues, business dealings, finance, religion, the media and male/female relationships. The focus shifts Oct. 4, to the positive development of youth and family, including a father/son forum. Women are encouraged to attend. You may access information on the conference from the foundation's web site at www.mocc.org or by calling 800-967-0085.

MEN OF COLOR CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER

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NATIONAL DAY OF PROTEST AIMS TO STOP POLICE BRUTALITY

Calling police brutality a nationwide epidemic, a national outrage and encouraging a halt to it, the National Coordinating Committee for the Oct. 22 Coalition to Stop Police Brutality has planned its second annual march. Last year thousands of people marched, rallied and protested in 45 cities against the rise in civilian injuries and deaths attributed to police. Organizers say they hope to continue building a nationwide movement "that can raise a giant stop sign against brutal, murderous cops and those who unleash and protect them." People in cities are encouraged to march, rally, hold poetry readings and other culturally significant events. Participants are encouraged to wear black in solidarity with the protests and in memory of the victims. For more information please call the Coalition at (212) 822-8596.

MILLION WOMAN MARCH TO TAKE PLACE OCT. 25

Organizers of the Million Woman March say the event will catapult black women to the forefront of the revolutionary struggle, the *Philadelphia New Observer* reported recently. The March is scheduled Oct. 25, in Philadelphia. "Philadelphia was chosen because it was the first capital of the United States, it was the place where the Declaration of Independence was signed and the home of the Liberty Bell," organizers said. They said the March was planned to showcase the importance of black women defining and addressing their own issues. All women are invited to attend. South Africa's Winnie Mandela is expected to participate. Minister Louis Farrakhan, Nation of Islam leader and the force behind the Million Man March (Oct. 16, 1995), has endorsed this March. For information on the March, call (215) 476-3683 or check out their website at www.timesx2.com/million/women.html.



FARRAKHAN

Lyons survives votes of no-confidence

Special to Sentinel-Voice

DENVER — Distracted ministers' angry pleas were drowned out by hymns and news reporters were booted out of the meeting hall Wednesday as the president of the nation's largest black denomination survived his third no-confidence vote in three days.

The Rev. Henry Lyons, accused of misusing church funds, promised to deliver reform to the 8.5-million-member National Baptist Convention U.S.A.

"The people have spoken, and they spoke in a great way," the St. Petersburg, Fla.,-based Lyons said after the raucous vote in his favor. "I do consider this a serious, serious wake-up call. We must tighten up our ship."

The Rev. Calvin Butts of New York City had moved for Lyons' ouster, accusing him of "deceptive acts." The motion failed by a voice vote of the 1,000 delegates.

Lyons, whose five-year term ends in 1999, has been accused of using church money to buy real estate, cars and jewelry for a woman not his wife. He has denied having an affair with the woman or misusing funds.

The scandal came to light in July when Lyon's wife was arrested after being accused of setting fire to a resort home in St. Petersburg that the minister owns with another woman. The minister's wife, Deborah, initially told police her husband was having an affair with the woman. She later recanted the accusation.

In Denver, about 150 dissidents tried to mount the stage Wednesday morning after church leaders refused to address their

objections to previous votes to keep Lyons in office. One of those votes was taken Tuesday after more than half of the meeting's delegates had left.

The dissidents were drowned out by hymn-singing by the Rev. Roscoe Cooper, general secretary of the church.

After about 10 minutes of singing, Lyons stepped in and asked that seven of the dissidents be allowed to speak, along with seven of his supporters.

As the seven dissidents took the stage, church officials roughly herded about 50 reporters out of the meeting hall, pushing those who refused to leave, as delegates shouted: "Go, go, go!"

The reporters were allowed to return after the dissidents finished speaking and Denver Mayor Wellington Webb interceded.

"They want you out so you can't see the corruption that happens in this convention," the Rev. Jasper Williams Jr. of Atlanta told reporters.

"This is not what the Baptist church is about. It's about the freedom to express ourselves."

Before the vote on Lyon's expulsion, the dissident ministers had distributed copies of what they called new, documented evidence of improprieties by Lyons, including a canceled check to a St. Petersburg, Fla., jewelry store for \$10,000.

"How can I go back and tell them what we've done?" the Rev. Ollie Wells said of his New York City congregation, as he denounced the decision to keep Lyons.

James Earl Ray appeals for new King trial

Special to the Sentinel-Voice

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Attorneys for James Earl Ray say their client should have gotten a trial in 1969 when a judge died days after receiving Ray's request to withdraw his guilty plea.

Two weeks after confessing to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis April 4, 1968, Ray sought to withdraw his plea, sending a letter to Shelby County Criminal Court Judge W. Preston Battle. Battle died of a heart attack five days later.

Ray's attorneys were expected to file a petition today

"I would respectfully request this court to treat this letter as a legal notice of an intent to ask for a reversal of the 99-year sentence."

— James Earl Ray

in Davidson County Chancery Court in Nashville. The petition, which seeks Ray's immediate release on bond, cites a state law that allows a new trial when a judge dies while considering a motion.

"He has an automatic right to a trial," attorney Andrew Hall said Monday from his office in Wartburg, Tenn.

Ray has been seeking a trial in a separate court action in

Memphis. In that court, the 69-year-old Ray has argued the hunting rifle found at the murder scene with his fingerprints on it was put there to frame him.

The Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals ruled Friday that Ray may continue trying to show he didn't fire the bullet that killed King. However, the court admonished Criminal Court Judge Joe Brown and

fellow Judge John Colton Jr. for exceeding their authority to investigate Ray's claims.

Ray, who is serving a 99-year sentence and is seriously ill from liver disease, has tried for more than 28 years to take back his guilty plea to killing King in Memphis in 1968. The plea has been upheld eight times by state and federal courts.

The petition to be filed by Hall and fellow attorney Mark Lane, who have not represented Ray in the motions over rifle-testing, centers on Ray's letter to Battle on March 26, 1969, two weeks after he pled guilty. (See Ray, Page 5)

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