

NEWS CLIPS

MISTRIAL DECLARED IN NEW YORK RACIAL BEATING

RIVERHEAD, N.Y. — After eight days of contentious jury deliberations, a judge declared a mistrial Wednesday in the case of a white man accused of clubbing a black man nearly to death. Austin Offen, 27, was charged with attempted murder, accused of crushing 23-year-old Shane Daniels' skull with a steel bar during a 1996 brawl outside a Long Island nightclub. It is unclear what started the fight. Racial epithets were shouted during the episode, but no civil rights charges were brought. Judge Joel Lefkowitz declared a mistrial after the jury reported that it was hopelessly deadlocked. One juror told the judge: "I feel that we are just about ready to go at each other's throats." Offen could get up to 25 years in prison. Daniels was in a coma for weeks after the beating and suffered broken bones in his skull and hands.

CIVIL WAR MEMORIAL REVEALS HISTORY OF BLACK SOLDIERS

At 2 p.m., Saturday, July 18, the first national monument to honor Colored Troops will be unveiled. "The Spirit of Freedom" sculpture and Civil War Memorial is a salute to the 208,943 U.S. Colored Troops and their 7,000 White Officers who fought and died in the Civil War. The unveiling is expected to attract hundreds of visitors, including descendants of the honorees, genealogists, historians and leaders from around the country. This historic ceremony will be held on the plaza adjacent to the Cardozo/Shaw Greenline metro stop, located at Vermont Avenue and U Street, NW, Washington, D.C. This area was renamed the "Shaw" neighborhood many years ago, in honor of Robert Gould Shaw, commander of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. Shaw and members of his unit settled in this area after the Civil War. The memorial sculpture depicts three soldiers and one sailor in the ready position on the front. It was designed by Ed Hamilton of Louisville, Ky. The \$2.6 million project was completed in partnership with the government of the District of Columbia, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the National Park Services, National Archives and D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton. Frank Smith, Jr., a D.C. council member, serves as the chairman of the Civil War Memorial Freedom Foundation. For more information call 888-648-8728.

UNITED NEGRO COLLEGE FUNDS RECEIVES \$42 MILLION GIFT

The United Negro College Fund announced that America's largest private foundation, Lilly Endowment, Inc., has awarded a \$42 million grant for a three-year program designed to assist historically Black colleges and universities with capital, scholarships and faculty funding needs. The gift is the largest ever given to a single entity by the Indianapolis-based foundation in its 61-year history. The Lilly Endowment Historically Black College and University Program will be administered by the UNCF. Funding will be used to address priority needs determined by each institution in three specific areas: capital needs (new construction, building renovation, laboratory equipment and information technology); scholarships and faculty recruitment and retention. "This is a major commitment by Lilly Endowment to Black colleges that recognizes the outstanding work these colleges do in providing low-cost, quality education for thousands of deserving young people," said William H. Gray, III, UNCF president and CEO.

WHITMAN PUTS \$50,000 BOUNTY ON WOMAN WANTED IN MURDER

In a March 11 letter to U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno, New Jersey Governor Christine Whitman, sought help in extraditing Assata Shakur (Joanne Chesimard) from Cuba. "As you are aware, the U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI in consultation with the New Jersey State Police, have diligently worked over the years to recapture Chesimard and return her to justice in New Jersey," Whitman wrote. "To demonstrate our own resolve on this matter, I have dedicated \$50,000 from my discretionary funds as a reward for the apprehension of Chesimard." She added that "Chesimard's comfortable sanctuary from justice in Cuba has been a constant affront to the State of New Jersey, the New Jersey State Police and law enforcement officers throughout the United States." In 1977, Shakur was convicted of murdering state trooper Werner Foerster. She escaped from a maximum security New Jersey prison in 1979 and has been in exile in Cuba since the early 1980s. In response to Whitman's bounty, a broad array of activists, academics and lawyers have written an open letter denouncing her tactic. The group called the governor's action "provocative, vindictive and grandstanding..."

Tapes ruled admissible in Texaco case

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. — A top Texaco executive's secretly recorded comments about the black cultural festival Kwanzaa will be allowed as evidence in his obstruction-of-justice case, a federal judge ruled Wednesday.

U.S. District Judge Barrington Parker made the decision as part of preliminary motions of the case, which is set to start April 20.

Robert Ulrich, a retired Texaco treasurer, had claimed that his disparaging reference to Kwanzaa was not relevant to his case and would unfairly prejudice a jury. He also claimed the quality of the tape recordings was too poor.

Ulrich's comments were made more than three years ago as Texaco executives gathered to discuss what evidence they

(See Tapes, Page 16)



White student has no proof of racial attack

Special to Sentinel-Voice

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Police have asked a white student leader who claimed she was the victim of a racial attack to take a lie detector test administered by them because they have found no evidence supporting her allegations.

Greensboro police, who had been criticized for not finding a suspect, have closed their investigation into the alleged attack on Molly Martin, president of the Guilford College student senate.

She claimed she was

knocked unconscious while alone in her office in February and someone scrawled the words "nigger lover" across her chest.

She passed a lie detector test she paid for.

Martin, 20, was running for re-election at the time and had a black running mate on her slate.

The alleged attack drew national attention and led to several anti-racism rallies and forums at the Quaker-founded college, where about 70 of 1,000 students are black.

Lt. Gary Cundiff said police found inconsistencies in Martin's story and a lack of physical evidence such as bruises.

Cundiff called Martin a "reluctant witness" who did not report the incident until the following day, after she washed off the writing and cleaned up her office.

In addition, he questioned whether an attacker would have taken the time to unbutton Martin's sweater before writing on her chest.

Although Martin already

passed a lie detector test, Cundiff said police still wanted her to take a test administered by them, a request he said she refused.

Cundiff did not accuse Martin of staging the attack.

"It's not my intention to indict her," he said. "But I do want to defend our investigation."

Martin has denied that police asked her to take a lie detector test and said she hired a lawyer and took her own test to squelch rumors that she had staged the incident.

Officer says NYPD covered up inquiry

Special to Sentinel-Voice

NEW YORK — A police sergeant alleges in a federal lawsuit that his commanders urged him to conceal evidence when two detectives were investigated in the beating of a man in 1994.

Sgt. Gil Q. Alvarez, a prosecutor in the New York Police Department's office, says he was demoted for criticizing the department's handling of the beating allegations.

Alvarez, 36, also claims police officials "intentionally undercharge officers accused of serious acts of misconduct and brutality to avoid the officers' dismissal from the NYPD."

Alvarez's suit was filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Manhattan. It seeks unspecified damages and a restraining order against the department.

According to the complaint, Alvarez, a 15-year veteran, was stripped of his position, in which he trained other departmental prosecutors, after he objected to the department's decision to reduce brutality charges against the detectives.

In that case, Alvarez brought photographs of the unidentified man, taken in November 1994, to the medical examiner. The photos showed the man, who had been in police custody, with blackened eyes that were nearly swollen shut, and Alvarez asked

experts if such injuries could have happened accidentally as the arresting detectives had said.

His lawsuit says the medical examiner's report proved the detectives were lying and that his superiors told him not to present the evidence at the departmental trial of the two detectives.

Ellen Borakove, a spokeswoman for the medical examiner, could not confirm whether a report had been issued in the case, The New York Times reported last week.

Deputy Inspector Michael Collins, a police spokesman, would not comment on the current case while it is pending in court.

In 1996, Alvarez sued the police department for discrimination, saying he was unfairly passed over for promotions because he complained about the offensive language officers used when they spoke of black, Hispanic and female colleagues. The city paid him \$62,500 to settle that suit.

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