

# Chicago trial puts spotlight on racism

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**  
CHICAGO — A 13-year-old black boy's foray into a mostly white neighborhood where he was brutally beaten has touched a nerve across the nation and prompted Chicagoans to divide themselves along racial lines.

President Clinton asked Americans to pray for Lenard Clark, who was found crumpled and unconscious on a South Side, while bicycling through a mostly white neighborhood one night last spring. The attack left him comatose by a "savage and senseless assault driven by nothing but hate," Clinton said. Politicians and civil rights leaders visited his hospital bedside.

Thirteen months later, the three young white men charged with trying to kill Clark are about to go on trial in a case that dramatically underscores

the nation's unresolved racial tensions.

The case may also put pressure on Cook County's State Attorney Richard Devine, a close ally of Mayor Richard M. Daley, to show that justice is colorblind. Daley is up for re-election next year and any perception of unfairness at the trial could hurt his efforts to build bridges to the city's black community.

"We as Americans and Chicagoans must come out of denial — racism is real," declared the Rev. B. Herbert Martin, whose church nestles in the shadows of the housing project where Lenard and his family lived at the time of the attack.

The scene of the beating, Armour Square, is at the edge of Bridgeport, a neighborhood of tidy blue-collar homes that has given Chicago four mayors in 50 years — two of them

named Daley.

The current mayor grew up a few blocks from the square, a shady expanse of grass and playground ringed by a neat wrought-iron fence just north of Comiskey Park, home of the neighborhood's beloved White Sox.

Just across the busy Dan Ryan Expressway is another world — a mile of crumbling high-rise housing projects where elevators often break, stairwells can be pitch-dark and foul-smelling and tough street gang members sell drugs in the doorways.

On the day that changed his life forever, Clark and a playmate crossed the bridge that spans the expressway on their bicycles, looking for a basketball game. They were just leaving the square when they were allegedly approached by a trio of menacing white men uttering

racial slurs.

Both tried to get away but Clark was caught. Police say his assailants knocked him off his bike, slammed his head into a stone wall and kicked him repeatedly, leaving the boy brain-damaged and in a comatose state.

Police searched the area for witnesses and arrested three young Bridgeport residents.

Frank Caruso, 19, Victor Jasas, 18, and Michael Kwidzinski, 20, were charged with attempted murder, aggravated battery and committing a hate crime. Police said the trio wanted to rid the area of blacks and bragged about the attack.

Each has denied attacking Clark. Martin, the minister, said the Caruso and Jasas families had been volunteers in a "Hands Across the Bridge" project he started to bring the

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# Neo-Nazi rally in Minn. turns violent

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Protesters at a Neo-Nazi rally Saturday threw rocks and insults at the group and took chains and poles to one of the organizer's cars.

Eleven members of the National Socialist Movement arrived for a noon rally in downtown St. Paul and were met by about 20 protesters, who called themselves Anti-Racist Action. The protesters chanted "No Nazis, No killers," and surrounded the neo-Nazis, spitting at them and throwing stones, while the neo-Nazis gave the fascist salute and shouted "Sieg Heil."

"This is not about free speech. This is about hate speech and they're very different things," protester Michelle Gross said. Members of the two groups fought as the protesters chased the neo-Nazis to their cars. One of the vehicles was pelted with rocks and protesters smashed in its hood, windows and headlights.

About 100 members of the supremacist group had planned a weekend meeting and rally in the Minneapolis suburb of Golden Valley, but called it off after a motel canceled their reservation.

Swastika-embellished literature mailed out by the group condemned Jews and "coloreds," and advertised the event as the "Adolf Hitler Memorial Rally."

Two people were arrested Saturday, one from each side. A neo-Nazi was charged with aggravated assault for allegedly punching a protester in the face, knocking out his front teeth, and police said they planned to charge the injured protester with inciting to riot. Several protesters suffered minor injuries; there was no indication how many members of the neo-Nazi group were hurt.

# Government investigates 'racist' drug study

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**

NEW YORK — A government-funded study in which poor black and Hispanic boys were given a now-recalled diet drug to test for violent tendencies is being criticized as risky and racist. The federal government has launched an investigation.

Scientists at an institute affiliated with Columbia University were testing the brain chemistry of 34 boys using fenfluramine, which has since been taken off the market because of suspected links to heart-valve damage in adults. It is the "fen" in the diet drug combination fen-phen.

Critics say the experiments, conducted in 1994 and 1995, offered no medical benefits and put the children at risk.

"These racist and morally offensive studies put minority children at risk of harm in order to prove they are generally predisposed to be violent in the future," said Vera Hassner Sharav, director of Citizens for Responsible Care in Psychiatry and Research.

The researchers defended their efforts as a legitimate attempt to understand the roots of violence.

The children were given a single fenfluramine pill and were kept in a hospital bed for at least five hours with a catheter in their arm while blood samples were taken. They were without food for at least 17 hours.

The boys all had older brothers who were juvenile delinquents, and the scientists wanted to know whether levels of serotonin in the brain could signal aggression. Fenfluramine induces the brain to release serotonin.

The boys' parents signed

consent forms for the research at the New York State Psychiatric Institute.

Similar research, conducted by Queens College and Mount Sinai School of Medicine, is also under fire. That project used fenfluramine on 66 boys of various ethnicities who had been treated for attention-deficit disorder.

The institute, which reached no firm conclusions in a study published in September, issued a statement Thursday saying its research tried to identify factors that could trigger aggression "in a population at risk for the development of antisocial behavior."

Fenfluramine and a chemically similar diet drug,

Redux, were pulled from the market because they were linked to potentially deadly heart valve damage.

Earlier this month, however, a large study found no sign that brief use of Redux causes dangerous heart valve problems.

Queens College, which is part of the City University of New York, said its study "posed no danger to children ... No child was harmed in any way."

Mount Sinai said the research complied with federal regulations. Its subjects were one-third black, one-third Hispanic and one-third white.

Two nonprofit legal groups filed complaints about both

experiments with the federal Office of Protection from

(See Drug Study, Page 15)

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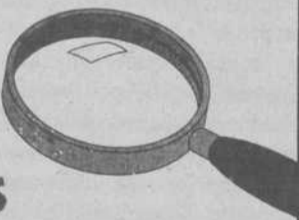


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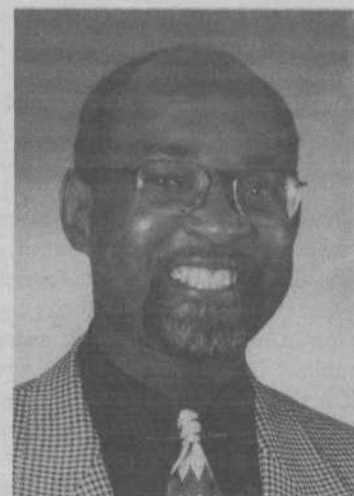
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