

# Sentences handed down in beating of black Marine

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Sitting in a wheelchair with only the slightest movement in his left hand, Lance Cpl. Carlos Colbert still has his voice to describe how five men savagely changed his life at a Memorial Day party.

The black Marine, who is paralyzed, faced the white men who drunkenly beat him, broke his neck and left him motionless on the ground in what prosecutors say was a racist attack.

"I don't blame y'all for what you did because y'all were taught (to hate)," Colbert, 21, said today. He has trouble speaking because of his injuries.

"But you're apologizing because you got caught. You

don't care about me. ... You just don't want to get caught."

His mother, Marie Colbert, said that even if the men were given 100 years, it wouldn't free her son from his life imprisonment in a wheelchair.

Jesse Lawson, 20; Trenton Solis, 18; Robert Rio, 23; Jed Jones, 21; and Steven Newark III, 18, pleaded guilty last month to felony assault and avoided potential life sentences.

Lawson, who admitted the attack was racially motivated, was sentenced to nine years. The others were sentenced to one year in prison and five years probation. They were given credit for time served since their September arrest,

and ordered not to drink alcohol and to undergo anger management counseling.

Prosecutor Craig Rooten said last week that Colbert wanted the case to go to trial, but understood the guilty pleas ensured jail time for his attackers. "There were a lot of people involved and there was a lot of alcohol involved, making it a difficult case to sort out," Rooten said.

Colbert, of Forestville, Md., was one of just a few blacks who attended a party last May at the home of Tim Bullard, a fellow Camp Pendleton Marine. At least 100 people packed the small

house at Santee, a rural community 20 miles northeast of San Diego.

When a fight broke out in the front yard, there were no streetlights to illuminate what was happening and most of the people were drunk, Rooten said. Police interviewed about 50 people over four months before making any arrests since few stories were alike.

One common denominator was that the attackers punched and kicked Colbert while shouting racial slurs and "white power," Rooten said. Colbert's memory of the attack was that a fellow

Marine went outside to help a woman who was hit by a "skinhead." When he heard the commotion, he went outside to see what was happening.

"Out of the corner of my eye I saw a guy coming toward me with brass knuckles," Colbert told *The San Diego Union-Tribune*. "I felt it on my neck. ... He came up behind me and broke my neck. I fell flat on my face." At a hearing last month, Judge Frederic Link asked Lawson if he beat Colbert because he was black and he tearfully said: "That is correct."

The parents of some of the attackers recently went on a radio talk show, saying their sons were coerced into confessing that the crime was racially motivated, and it really was just a drunken brawl. A witness called in to say that such hatred isn't created by alcohol, it only enhances it.

Colbert spent several months at a Veteran's Administration hospital in Long Beach before moving to a Virginia hospital closer to his family's Maryland home. He was recently moved to a home modified for his wheelchair, Rooten said.

## Luncheon

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members and mount a campaign to encourage blacks to invest their dollars in Enterprise Community Credit Union.

Consumer members pay \$25-a-year and receive a membership card, the monthly newsletter and free admission to meetings. A yearly business membership of \$150 includes the benefits of consumer membership, along with a free listing in the Las Vegas Black Business Directory. Corporate memberships cost \$350-a-year, have all the perks of business membership and offer up to 1,000 mailing labels from RBD. There are also \$500 life memberships which include all the benefits business membership for life. Those interested can call 392-5303.

## Advertisement

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said the advertisement was never meant to appear in print. Scrapped after failing pre-publication test screening, the ad still found its way to *Jet* magazine, and to *Jet* magazine alone.

"At the final litmus test of review, the ad was determined to be inappropriate and was pulled," said DeJoseph. "Due to a clerical error, it was printed in *Jet*."

According to DeJoseph, the ad was not aimed at African-Americans or other

minority groups, but was intended to attract a young, female audience. Since being printed, she said the automotive company has felt a significant amount of pressure from African-American organizations, and has vowed to increase sensitivity in future advertisements.

David Brown, president of Beach Advertising, notes that such "irresponsible advertising" helps to perpetuate the popular stereotypes that have

victimized black men for more than a century.

"Ads like that reinforce all types of negative things, and to associate unemployment with African-American men is just terrible," said Brown, noting that *Jet* should also bear a substantial amount of blame. "The unfortunate thing is that there are a lot of people out there who wouldn't be offended by such a racist ad, and those are the images we are trying to fight everyday."

After repeated attempts,

*Jet* magazine denied the *Tribune's* request for a comment.

NNPA president Leavell intimated she may soon demand a formal meeting with Toyota Motor Sales Inc., adding that the automotive company might owe more than just an apology.

"I hope to meet with them to make sure these people realize that when they put out advertisements, they must always be sensitive and aware of the black community," said Leavell.

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