

NEWS CLIPS

BLACK CUSTOMS INSPECTORS IN ATLANTA TO FILE DISCRIMINATION SUIT

Black Atlanta airport employees are preparing to file a lawsuit charging the U.S. Customs Service with discrimination against people of color, especially those detained for "flying while Black," said Cathy Harris, a senior U.S. Customs inspector at the Atlanta Hartsfield International Airport. Harris, also secretary of the Customs Employees Against Discrimination, alleges that White customs inspectors target Black travelers, especially women, for body searches, X-rays and Monitored Bowel Movement exams to see if they are carrying drugs. She says Black, female inspectors are being forced to perform demeaning inspections and when anyone tries to report the acts, their co-workers retaliate. "These White men are doing this, and every time we report them to management, they accuse us of false allegations. They are never touched," she said.

HARVARD PROFESSOR AMONG NATIONAL MEDALS OF SCIENCE RECIPIENTS

William Julius Wilson, a professor at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, was among the 18 individuals awarded National Medals of Science and National Medals of Technology in a ceremony held last month at the White House. Wilson, who received the medal for his social science research on the cause and duplication of inner-city poverty, was the lone Black. "Each year, I look forward to presenting these medals because they show again that America's future is flowering as a result of the work of the honorees and people like them all over our country ... One of the things that impresses me is the nature of the work that all of you do," said President Clinton during the ceremony. "I want to compliment the committee on recognizing today the role of social science in honoring William Julius Wilson whose work has deeply influenced what I have tried to do as President — to bring the benefits of work to people too long denied them," he said.

JUDGE STOPS ANTI-MASK ORDINANCE

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP) — A federal judge has ruled a Goshen city ban on masks unconstitutional, saying it violates the rights of Ku Klux Klansmen to express themselves and associate anonymously. U.S. District Judge Robert L. Miller issued the ruling May 4. It was made public by lawyers on the case Monday. Last June, Goshen enacted an ordinance making it illegal for anyone 18 or older to wear a mask, hood or other device in public to conceal his or her identity, except for religious, safety or medical reasons. Violators were subject to a \$2,500 fine. City officials hoped the measure would discourage the KKK from rallying there. The American Knights argued that they consider themselves a religion, and their national leader, the Rev. Jeffrey Berry, testified that members conceal themselves because they are sinners in God's eyes. The group also said many members wear the hoods to remain anonymous and reduce the risk of retaliation. Indiana was a Klan stronghold in the 1920s. The state had 10 active chapters in 1997, according to KlanWatch, a national group that monitors KKK activity.

BROWN: THERE'S NO AGREEMENT IN CUSTODY CASE

LOS ANGELES (AP) — There is no agreement yet on the custody of O.J. Simpson's younger children, their grandfather said Tuesday, contradicting statements from Simpson's lawyer that he would retain custody. Lou Brown, the father of Simpson's slain ex-wife, said, "Nothing has been agreed upon. ... There is no agreement. I can't say anything else." Simpson's lawyer, Bernard Leckie, told The Associated Press on Monday that an agreement giving custody to Simpson was ready to be signed. "I don't know why the attorney was discussing it," Brown said. "It's supposed to be confidential." Brown's lawyer did not return a phone call seeking comment. Simpson was out of town and couldn't be reached. The children, Justin, 10, and Sydney, 13, live with Simpson. Brown and his wife, Juditha, sued for custody and lost until an appeals court interceded. The California Supreme Court ruled in February the custody case could go back to court for another trial. But Leckie said Monday that Simpson would keep custody of the children in a settlement with the Browns.

Louima can't identify second cop

NEW YORK (AP) — A Haitian immigrant told a jury he can't positively identify one of two officers accused of torturing him in a police station bathroom.

But Abner Louima stuck by his story.

In opening statements, federal prosecutor Kenneth Thompson described in graphic detail how the defendants supposedly battered and handcuffed Louima inside a patrol car and then sodomized him in a bloody assault in a precinct bathroom in Brooklyn.

Officer Justin Volpe, 27, and three other officers are charged with assaulting Louima outside the precinct.

And Volpe and Officer Charles Schwarz are charged in the attack inside the precinct bathroom, where Volpe allegedly stuck a broomstick into Louima's rectum and then jammed it into his mouth. A fifth officer is charged with covering up the attack.

Louima was hospitalized with severe internal injuries that included a ruptured bladder and colon, prompting widespread demonstrations against police brutality in the city. He has recovered and is expected to be the government's star witness.

"Inside that bathroom, Abner Louima suffered more than a beating," Thompson

told the jury of eight whites, three Hispanics and one black. "Ladies and gentlemen, Abner Louima was tortured inside that bathroom."

According to Thompson, Volpe at one point warned Louima: "If you make any noise, we kill you."

The prosecutor said that Louima was picked up in a case of mistaken identity: Police wanted Louima's cousin, who had actually struck Volpe during a melee outside a Brooklyn nightclub.

"When someone hurts Justin Volpe, he believes in hurting back," Thompson said. "He was furious, and he wanted revenge."

A defense attorney countered that Louima had "150 million reasons" to lie about the incident — a \$150 million lawsuit against the city. Louima is represented by O.J. Simpson lawyers Johnnie Cochran Jr. and Barry Scheck in the lawsuit.

Asked to look at defendant Charles Schwarz on Monday at the police brutality trial, Louima said the officer resembled the officer who dragged him into the bathroom. But, he added, "I'm not sure."

Schwarz's attorney, Stephen Worth, seized the chance to invoke Louima's admission that he had lied (See Louima, Page 16)

Two N.J. troopers indicted on 'profiling' charge

J. Zamgba Browne
Special to Sentinel-Voice

A grand jury in New Jersey has indicted two state troopers on charges of tampering with key evidence in the April 23 shooting of four Black and Latino college students on the New Jersey Turnpike.

Officers James Kenna and John I. Hogan reportedly fired on a van in which the students, Leroy Grant, Keshon Moore (the driver), Rayshawn Brown and Danny Reyes, were driving to a basketball tryout in Durham, N.C. Kenna and Hogan were charged with falsifying records to conceal the evidence following the incident.

Moore alleges that one of the officers put his weapon up to the windshield and he ducked to prevent from being shot.

"I may have accidentally put my foot on the accelerator while the car was still in reverse, and it started to move," Moore said.

The police said Moore tried to run over them when the van was stopped for exceeding the speed limit. Moore vehemently denied the claim.

The troopers opened fire, shooting at the vehicle 11 times. Grant and Reyes, who were seriously wounded, were taken by helicopter to nearby Camden for emergency surgery.

Since the incident, there has been widespread criticism and allegations of "racial profiling" of African-American and Latino drivers by highway troopers across this country.

Late last month, the NAACP called for

intervention by both houses of Congress to curb the problem. The organization's president, Kweisi Mfume, said he has urged members of the House of Representatives and Senate to adopt a resolution that would require police departments collect data to determine the extent profiling is used as a basis for traffic stops.

"If we are going to seriously address the problem of police stopping drivers only because they are African American or some other ethnic minority, we must collect factual data to determine the extent of the problem," Mfume said.

He called on Congress to pass the Traffic Stops Statistics Study Act introduced by Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., as a first step to produce the much-

needed study. "So far, we only have anecdotal information."

The Conyers bill would require the Justice Department to conduct the study of routine traffic stops by police agencies.

Rep. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., co-sponsor of the bill, said the data to be obtained will have a two-pronged effect.

First, "we intend to get some answers to the disturbing questions" that continue to surface regarding racial profiling. Secondly, he said the information would lay the foundation for what is believed to be true: That Black and Latino people, particularly men, cannot drive on the country's highways and byways without risk of being stopped by police because of the color of their

(See Profilers, Page 16)

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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

EMPHASIS ON PERSONAL INJURY CASES

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