

NEWS BRIEFS

WHITE POPULATIONS DECREASE IN MAJOR CITIES

Census 2000 data shows the word "minorities" could not be used now as an expression to refer to ethnic groups in large cities. The Brookings Institution's Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy in Washington, D.C., revealed the White population has fallen considerably in 48 large cities. Cities like San Diego, Philadelphia and Boston that were predominately White in 1990 now have multi-racial populations. "It has been going on for a long time. The White population has been moving to the suburbs, while Blacks moved from rural areas and the immigration of Latin Americans and Asians increased.... This would change urban politics," William Spriggs, director of the National Urban League Institute For Opportunity and Equality, told the NNPA News Service.

STUDY: BLACKS GET EMERGENCY STROKE TREATMENT FIVES TIMES LESS

Blacks get emergency clot-busting treatment for strokes five times less than Whites, according to a new study. Racial differences in treatment existed even after factors like gender and type of insurance and age were taken into account. But S. Claiborne Johnston, a study author, said they needed time to analyze why, above all other factors, race should be the issue. "We have to consider the possibility that racism is contributing," Johnston said to reporters.

HIGH TECH COMPANIES HIRE LESS MINORITIES

Technology firms in Silicon Valley employ less African-Americans, says a new study. In the late '90s, the report from the Coalition for Fair Employment in Silicon Valley revealed that out of 253 companies there, 5,000 African-Americans were employed, which was only about 4 percent of the workers. "There are qualified African-Americans who apply, but they're not taken seriously and they're having to work on a contract basis," the study's author, John Templeton, told reporters.

LAWYER CONFIDENT PUFFY WILL BEAT VIOLATION

MIAMI — A lawyer for Sean "Puffy" Combs says she expects a judge to dismiss a traffic violation filed against the rapper in April. A pretrial hearing was postponed Thursday on Combs' charge of making an improper lane change while he was riding a scooter along Ocean Drive, a South Beach strip. "I'm confident that once the judge sees the defense's evidence, the case will be dismissed," Combs' attorney, Jayne Weintraub, said. "There is no case." Weintraub said the hearing was continued because of the rap mogul's travel schedule. Circuit Judge Jeffrey Swartz has not set a trial date. Police arrested Combs in April and charged him with driving with a suspended license after they pulled him over in Miami Beach. Weintraub said the charge was later dropped. She said a paperwork delay was the reason the rapper's driver's license showed up as suspended when police stopped him. Combs was acquitted in March of bribery and weapons charges in New York.

FBI TO INVESTIGATE HUNTINGTON BEACH POLICE SHOOTING

HUNTINGTON BEACH, Calif. (AP) - The FBI will investigate the fatal police shooting of an 18-year-old man who was mistaken for another person they were chasing. Agents will try to determine whether Huntington Beach police violated the civil rights of Antonio Saldívar, who was shot and killed by officers May 5 in this town about 35 miles south of Los Angeles. Police said Saldívar was carrying a toy gun when he was shot. "We don't have any particular evidence that there are any civil right violations in this incident," Thom Mrozek, a spokesman for the U.S. attorney's office in Los Angeles, said Thursday. "However, we do think that there is enough to warrant federal scrutiny." Orange County sheriff's officials said earlier this week that police lost sight of a man they were chasing and then happened upon Saldívar. Brigido Cara Mendez, 21, later told police that he was the man officers were chasing that day. Also Thursday, sheriff's investigators said that no fingerprints were found on the toy rifle. Forensic experts said weapon exams tend not to find fingerprints because of the gun's surface.

By Richard Muhammad and Eric Ture Muhammad
Special to Sentinel-Voice

There are between 100,000 and 300,000 child prostitutes in the United States, and the number may be growing, activists, juvenile justice and law enforcement officials fear.

Reasons for the increase vary: from laws that don't do enough to punish pimps, to more children feeling alienated at home or suffering in dysfunctional families who run away and have increased problems with drug addiction.

There is also the challenge of bringing cases with no witnesses, except the victimized child, who either believes she loves, or knows she fears, her pimp.

Speaking under condition of anonymity, caseworkers in Los Angeles, New York and Washington, D.C. expressed frustration. They worry cases fall through the cracks and sometimes feel ill-prepared to help. These aren't children of 10 and 15 years ago. At 9-, 10-, 11-years-old, they are in love with these old men who talk nice to them, said the L.A. social service worker.

The sweet talk is an introduction into what one report called the most overlooked form of child abuse in America. In addition, local police often sees child prostitution as a nuisance crime and there is a misconception that the children are willing accomplices, it said.

"Black women and young girls especially, find themselves in a unique and extremely difficult position in society," said Verdita Nelson, a researcher and author of "Prostitution: Where Racism and Sexism Intersect."

"Trapped in a culture dominated by White supremacy and male dominance, the Black female becomes especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation," argues Ms. Nelson.

The case of a 13-year-old Black girl in Atlanta captured some attention in recent months. The juvenile was a

dancer in a strip club that has come under investigation by federal officials. Her alleged pimp, a 43-year-old man, pleaded guilty to statutory sexual seduction and second-degree kidnapping in May, according to the Clark County, Nevada, district attorney. He faces up to 20 years in prison. Sentencing is scheduled for July 23 in the case.

The man allegedly took the girl to Las Vegas on a Greyhound bus in April and had sex with her. Atlanta officials are seeking the former strip club bouncer, and plan to draw up charges against him, according to local media.

There has also been a request that an employee in the U.S. attorney's office be investigated because of the girl's allegations that he coerced her into sex while in his

ten troubled, far from home and may suffer drug problems.

"It is a complete moral breakdown," a sex crimes unit investigator in Fulton County, Ga., told The Final Call, speaking under condition of anonymity.

"Unless we have a corroborating witness, which is going to be rare, who is going to turn on a pimp? It is extremely difficult to make a case. These children do not operate as adults, they do this (prostitution) for cheap clothes, jewelry or to get their hair braided," the investigator lamented.

The New York social worker agreed. "These girls have a false love and false sense as to what they want out of life. They lie for (pimps) and protect them. Most of them, though, operate out of fear, because they

Africa, Central and South America is a problem, western countries also suffer from the scourge. In fact, child sex tours are often arranged from the U.S. and Canada to poorer nations.

In the United States, child sex workers, 14- to 17-years-old, may make \$500-\$600 a night, but rarely receive more than \$25 as an allowance, according to a U.S. Labor Department report. Some officials estimate 25-30 percent of child sex workers are younger than 18.

Youngsters are often seen as safer than older women, less likely to suffer from sexually transmitted diseases. But experts say that perception is not true.

A national survey of juvenile court judges by The Atlanta Journal Constitution concluded child prostitution is up. In rural areas, judges reported the sharpest increase since 1995, saying their figures were up by 75 percent and, on average, three youths a month were involved with prostitution.

The reasons for the increase varied: In Flint, Mich., it was linked to drug addiction, where parents used their children to make money. In Atlanta, most child prostitutes were from middle and upper class families, according to the Fulton County Sex Crimes Unit. These youth, mostly between the ages of 13-17, fill the city's hot spots of Five-Points, the Atlanta Underground and Lenox shopping malls. They become the prey of smooth talkers and sex predators, police said.

Selling sex is often linked to runaways. "Kids usually turn to it as a kind of survival sex," said a hotline worker for a group that helps runaways. About 3 percent of callers the hotline takes each year are from youth who admit having to survive by selling themselves. It happens to straight and gay youth, the hotline worker said.

There are roughly 1.3 million runaways in America, often fleeing abusive homes and ripe for exploitation, the hotline worker noted.

"Trapped in a culture dominated by White supremacy and male dominance, the Black female becomes especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation." — Verdita Nelson

custody. She had been brought back from Nevada, but ran away.

Her mother allowed her to remain in the man's care over a weekend. No placement in a juvenile facility was available. The man has two daughters and adamantly denied the charges. He resigned from his job, saying his integrity had been questioned. He had helped spearhead a major effort to focus on child prostitution, after Atlanta officials were alarmed by signs of its rise. In one instance, a state official said a group home was a recruiting ground for pimps preying on young girls. Many suspect the 13-year-old, who allegedly stole the man's car, made the accusation to get back at him.

Misplaced devotion to pimps is a constant in the child sex trade. Pimps rule using a combination of comfort, protection and terror to control victims, who are of-

also believe that police and the courts can't protect them. They have seen what has happened to some of their friends," the social worker, who does street outreach, said.

In Washington, D.C., a social worker who deals with agencies in the District of Columbia and Maryland, said a great dilemma is identifying the crisis. "Even as a social worker, this isn't something we've discussed in any of our classes, nor has it been an issue. Even in the work I've done voluntarily in various women's health organizations, we touch more on assault and rape. But we don't necessarily talk about young girls in prostitution," she said.

Advocates note child prostitution has only gotten major attention in recent decades. U.S. media often cites exploitation of children in foreign countries. While child sexual exploitation in Asia,

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