

# Beaten victim denies officer account

LOS ANGELES (AP) - A Black man beaten by police during a videotaped arrest denied that he was carrying wire cutters that were mistaken for a gun, as one officer reportedly contended.

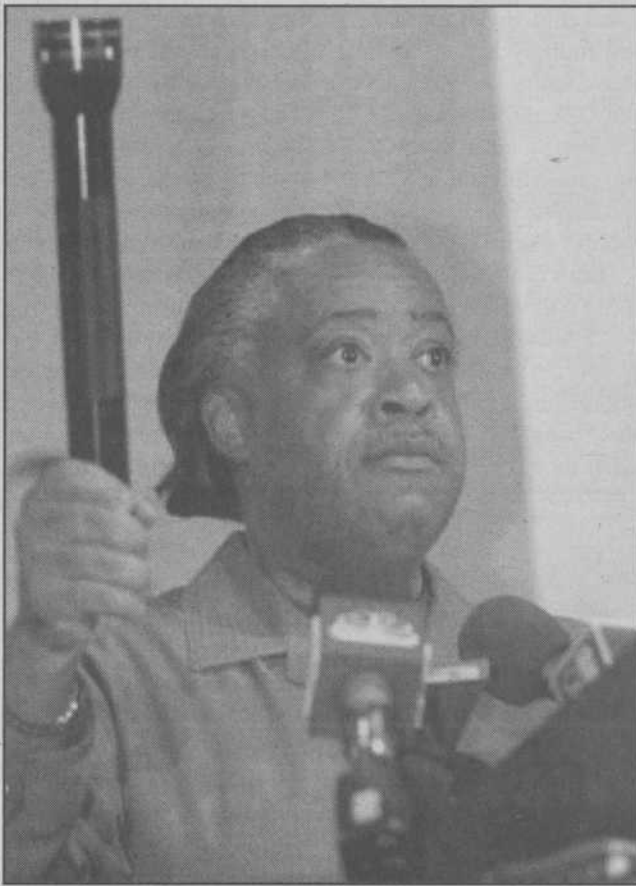
Suspected car thief Stanley Miller told his lawyer Monday that he wasn't carrying any metal objects when he was struck 11 times with a flashlight as he lay on the ground after a chase last week, the Los Angeles Times reported Tuesday.

"If (police) came up with something, the information I'm getting is they either planted it on him or they're making it up," attorney Mark Werksman said after a jailhouse interview with Miller.

Werksman said Miller told him he was wearing sweat pants with loose pockets that would not hold his possessions, so he had his cell phone in one hand and \$8 in cash in the other as he ran.

According to an account in the Times last week, John J. Hatfield, the officer who kicked Miller and struck him with the flashlight, told investigators he was trying to stun Miller after another officer, trying to handcuff Miller, felt a metal object in Miller's pants and yelled "gun." The object turned out to be wire cutters, the Times said, citing unidentified sources.

The confrontation has in-



The Rev. Al Sharpton holds up a flashlight as he speaks to a crowd on Monday to discuss the videotaped police beating of a suspected car thief during a community meeting at Faith United Methodist Church in Los Angeles.

flamed tensions in the city and prompted local and federal investigations. The case has been compared to the 1991 videotaped beating of Rodney King, which resulted in riots after four White officers were acquitted of state charges.

Police Chief William Bratton has not made any comment on whether Miller was carrying anything.

Hatfield has declined to publicly discuss the incident.

Police said they spotted Miller running a stop sign in South Los Angeles last Wednesday and found that the car he was driving had been reported stolen. A nearly 30-minute car chase ended with a foot chase in Compton.

News helicopters showed Miller with his hands in the air and appearing to surren-

der at gunpoint when he was tackled by an officer. He was on the ground when Hatfield kicked and then hit him.

The eight officers involved in Miller's arrest have been placed on administrative duty, and three will be investigated for possible use of excessive force.

On Monday, Bratton met with the Rev. Al Sharpton to discuss the beating. The chief and the civil rights activists said they were making progress toward cooling racial tensions.

"Clearly, many of us around the country are outraged at what we saw in the video," Sharpton said. "But the outrage must lead to results where the citizens and police are protected."

Miller has a criminal record dating back to 1994 that includes car theft and forgery, records show. He was paroled in February after being convicted of trying to escape custody.

Miller remained in custody pending a parole violation hearing. He was expected to be charged with car theft, said Jane Robison, a spokeswoman for the district attorney's office.

# Jordan: Black issues to be debate topics

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Washington, D.C. powerbroker Vernon Jordan, the lead negotiator for Democrat John Kerry for the three presidential debates this fall, says he will work to assure that the concerns of African-Americans are addressed in the forums.

"There are going to be questions and there are going to be discussions and there's going to be debate. And in that response to issues, I am confident that Sen. Kerry, our nominee, will satisfy the needs and aspirations and the pain of Black people," Jordan said in an interview. "We're going to be consistent with tradition and work with the Commission on Presidential Debates. That is sort of the official debate arbitrator for presidential campaigns. We will work with them. But we will also make sure that these debates take into account all Americans; not just White Americans, but everybody."

The first debate is set for Sept. 30 at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Fla. The other two will be held in St. Louis and Tempe, Ariz.

Jordan, a lawyer and Washington insider, is a close friend of Bill Clinton. He is a partner in the investment firm of Lazard Frere & Company in New York. But, he is long known and respected in the Black community, having served as president of the National Urban League and executive director of the United Negro College Fund.

Jordan assumed a major role for Kerry after two debates, sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus with the conservative Fox News Channel, were widely criticized for not delving enough into domestic policy issues.

(See Jordan, Page 14)

## Beatings

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The treatment of Miller, who was arrested for investigation of grand theft auto, was the latest incident to draw fire from civil rights activists who have long accused the department of discrimination and use of excessive force against minorities. They believe efforts to reform the LAPD have not gone far enough.

"The thing that hasn't changed is the accountability level as far as police violence goes, and particularly the department's continued failure to weed out rogue cops," said former police commissioner Melanie Lomax.

Four years ago, the LAPD agreed to implement a federal consent decree after the Justice Department determined it had engaged in a "pattern and practice" of discrimination.

Police recently said the department had completed changes detailed in the decree, including key provisions on training and internal



Civic activist Maxwell Russell, right, holds a sign outside the 77th Street Area Los Angeles Police station in Los Angeles on Friday. Community activists gathered together in response of the videotaped arrest of Stanley Miller.

investigations.

Bratton has made reform a priority since joining the department two years ago. He cut short an East Coast trip to return to the city on Thursday to deal with criticism over Miller's arrest.

Bratton said the investigation would be "transparent" for public scrutiny and "go where the truth will take us." He also said comparisons to the King beating were

unfair and noted changes have been made to the way the department handles complaints.

Some residents were impressed by the swift reaction of police officials following the beating, giving them hope that justice might prevail.

"Police got on this quick — much quicker than with Rodney King," said Vett Peterson, who feared rioting would follow Miller's arrest.

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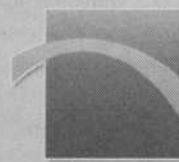
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