

Atlanta suspect faces 4 murder counts

ATLANTA (AP)—Shackled and surrounded by 19 officers in a cinder-block jail room, the man accused in the crime spree that left an Atlanta judge and three others dead appeared before a judge Tuesday for the first time since the rampage.

Brian Nichols, 33, was informed that authorities plan to charge him with murder.

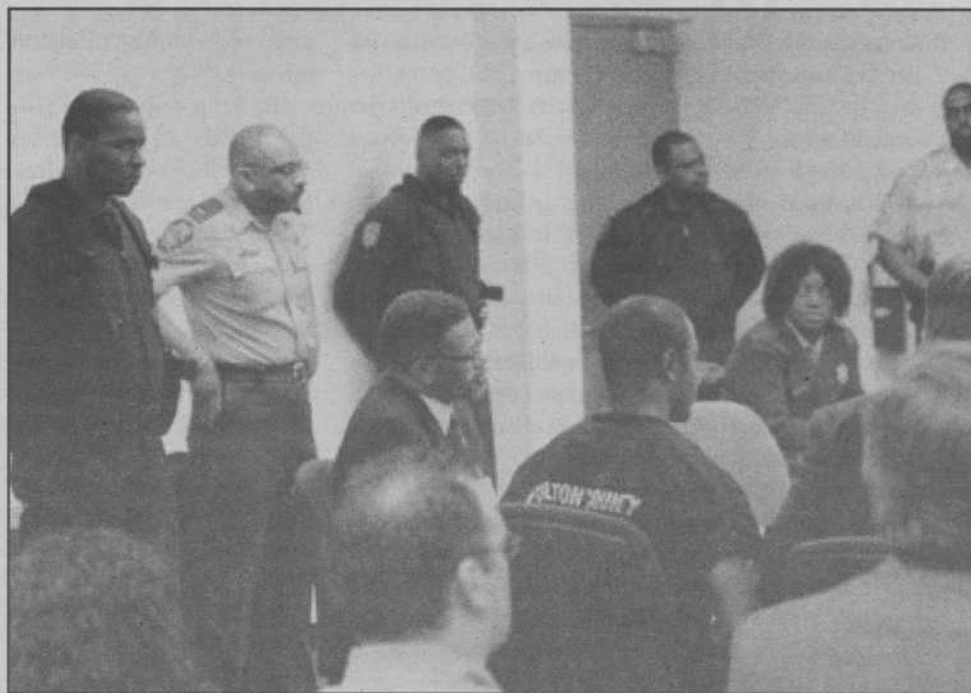
Nichols looked straight ahead during the five-minute hearing and did not make eye contact with anyone in the room, including the judge. He spoke only once, when Judge Frank Cox asked him if he had any questions.

"Not at this time," he said.

Nichols was held without bail on the rape charge he was on trial for Friday, when he allegedly overpowered a guard at the Fulton County courthouse, stole her gun and started a rampage that terrorized Atlanta and left four people dead.

This time, authorities took no chances for the hearing at the Fulton County Jail.

All prisoners booked into the jail make their first appearance before a judge in-



Law enforcement officers line the wall as Brian Nichols, right center, the suspect in a crime spree that left a judge and three others dead, appears in court at the Fulton County Jail in Atlanta on Tuesday. Nichols was in shackles and escorted by deputies. The hearing at the court in the jail was before Cobb County Chief Magistrate Judge Frank Cox.

side the jail, not at the courthouse. But 19 officers — almost five times the usual number — packed the small room, and several more officers blocked the hall outside.

Those entering the hearing room were searched with a handheld metal detector.

Prosecutor Michele McCutcheon informed Cox that the state will pursue four charges of murder against Nichols.

Nichols is accused of killing the judge on his rape case and two others at the courthouse, then killing a federal agent while on the run. After

a 26-hour manhunt, he was captured Saturday at an apartment complex where he had taken a woman hostage.

The hostage, Ashley Smith, read a religious book to Nichols before he freed her and she called 911. Gov. Sonny Perdue said she will

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Rice denies '08 presidential aspirations

WASHINGTON (AP)—Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who has been mentioned as a possible Republican presidential candidate in 2008, denies having any such ambitions now.

During a discussion with editors and reporters at The Washington Times, Rice was asked, "Would you consider running for president in 2008?"

"I have never wanted to

run for anything," Rice said in the interview published Saturday. "I don't think I even ran for class anything when I was in school."

In a poll conducted in February, 42 percent of voters said Rice should run for the White House.

The survey, conducted by the Siena College Research Institute and sponsored by Hearst Newspapers, found that 81 percent of people

would vote for a woman for president; 53 percent thought Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., should try for the job.

"I'm going to try to be a really good secretary of state," Rice told the Times. "I'm going to work really hard

at it. I have enormous respect for people who do run for office. It's really hard for me to imagine myself in that role."

As if she would rule out a candidacy, Rice said, "Oh, that's not fair, but ... I really can't imagine it."



Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, appears on CBS' "Face the Nation" show in Washington, D.C. on Sunday.

Woman files civil lawsuit vs. Cosby

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—The woman whose molestation accusations against Bill Cosby were deemed insufficient evidence by prosecutors has filed a civil suit against the comedian.

The woman, a former Temple University employee who now lives in Canada, came forward in January with accusations about the incident she said happened a year before. Prosecutors last month said they had not found sufficient evidence to support charges against Cosby.

The civil suit was filed in U.S. District Court.

"That prosecutor was out of line," said Delores Troiani, an attorney for the woman. "It is not a comment on her credibility, or the evidence in this case."

Cosby has denied the sexual-assault allegations, and in an interview with The National Enquirer last week said, "I am not going to give in to people who try to exploit me because of my celebrity status."

Cosby's attorney, John Schmitt, released a statement through the comedian's publicist saying his client "will address this matter through the judicial process and not through the media."

The woman claimed Cosby gave her three blue pills that rendered her semiconscious, then sexually molested her at his home in suburban Philadelphia in January 2004. She said she awoke to find her bra undone and her clothes in disarray. According to the suit, the woman also said that after the investigation became public, Cosby's representatives falsely told reporters that her family had asked him for money before going to police. She is seeking defamation damages.

"He has compounded it by making it appear as if she tried to extort money from him," Troiani said.

In the Enquirer interview, Cosby was quoted as saying, "Looking back on it, I realize that words and actions can be misinterpreted by another person."

"I'm not saying that what I did was wrong, but I apologize to my loving wife, who has stood by my side for all these years, for any pain I have caused her," he said. The article did not elaborate.

The long-married Cosby, best-known as a warm, wisecracking TV dad, has provoked debate this past year with blunt remarks on personal responsibility aimed at the Black community. In 1997, the year his son Ennis was murdered, he acknowledged a brief affair with the mother of Autumn Jackson, a young woman convicted of extorting him.

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