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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

Panel backing drug for Blacks

WASHINGTON (AP) - A drug targeted specifically for Black Americans with heart problems is on track to become the first drug in the U.S. marketed to a specific racial group.

A clinical trial of the medication BiDil for heart failure in Black Americans was halted early when it became apparent that those using it did better than those who did not.

The Food and Drug Administration's cardiovascular drug advisory panel voted 9-0 on Thursday in favor of allowing sales of BiDil.

The drug's trial, on just over 1,000 individuals, was launched after the FDA turned away the medication following a study involving all races that showed little improvement — but also gave hints that Blacks might have had some benefit. The maker, NitroMed of Lexington, Mass., then decided on a trial using Blacks only, a population that has more than twice the rate of heart failure as Whites.

In heart failure, the heart is too weak to beat effectively and fluid builds up in the lungs. As many as half of all victims die within five years.

The usual treatment is with drugs called ACE inhibitors, but research has indicated they do not work as well in Blacks as in Whites. BiDil is a combination of two drugs: hydralazine, which eases blood pressure, and isosorbate dinitrate, which is used for heart pain.

The combination also boosts the amounts of nitric oxide in the blood, a substance that is found in lower levels in Blacks and which has several roles in heart health.

In the study of 1,050 Blacks, half were given stan-
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Killen convicted in deaths

PHILADELPHIA, Miss. (AP) — An 80-year-old former Ku Klux Klansman was convicted of manslaughter Tuesday in the 1964 slayings of three civil rights workers — exactly 41 years after they disappeared.

The jury of nine Whites and three Blacks reached the verdict on their second day of deliberations, rejecting murder charges against Edgar Ray Killen.

Killen showed no emotion as the verdict was read. He was comforted by his wife as he sat in his wheelchair, wearing an oxygen tube. Heavily armed police formed a barrier outside a side door to the courthouse and jurors were loaded into two waiting vans and driven away.

Civil rights workers James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner were ambushed on June 21, 1964. Their bodies were found 44 days later buried in an earthen dam. They had been beaten and shot.

The notorious case inspired the 1988 film "Mississippi Burning."



Beth Tennyson of Meridian, Miss., holds up a sign in support of the three murdered civil rights workers during the prosecution's closing arguments of the accused Ku Klux Klansman Edgar Ray Killen murder case in Philadelphia, Miss. on Monday. The workers were murdered in 1964.

Prosecutors had asked the jury to send a message to the rest of the world that Mississippi has changed and is

committed to bringing to justice those who killed to preserve segregation in the 1960s. They said the evi-

dence was clear that Killen organized the attack on the three victims.

Killen's lawyers conceded he was in the Klan but said that did not make him guilty. They pointed out that prosecutors offered no witnesses or evidence that put Killen at the scene of the crime. Killen did not take the stand, but has long claimed that he was at a wake at a funeral home when the victims were killed.

While Killen was indicted on murder charges, which could carry a life sentence, prosecutors asked the judge to allow the jury to consider the lesser charge of manslaughter, which has a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

Attorney General Jim Hood said earlier that with a murder charge, prosecutors must prove intent to kill. With a manslaughter charge, he said, prosecutors need to prove only that a victim died while another crime was being committed.

Killen was only person ever brought up on murder
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Anti-lynching measure faced opposition before passage

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Although 13 senators are on record as opposing the recent resolution apologizing for not passing anti-lynching legislation, another eight signed up in days after the measure had been passed by the Senate, records show. Taken together, slightly more than a fifth of the Senate refused to support the measure before it was adopted.

"This resolution has been circulated for months now. Everyone knew about it. So, to me, all of the persons who did not sign it show lack of concern for this important issue," says U. S. Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), the ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee. "I think everybody that didn't sign the bill has made a seri-

ous revelation about how they feel about race in America in the 21st century."

The 13 senators still refusing to co-sponsor the resolution are: Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.); Robert Bennett (R-Utah); Michael Enzi and Craig Thomas (R-Wyo.); Judd Gregg and John Sununu (R-N.H.); Richard Shelby (R-Ala.); Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.); Gordon Smith (R-Ore.); John Cornyn and Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-Texas); and Thad Cochran and Trent Lott (R-Miss.).

Eight more signed on as co-sponsors after the resolution had been adopted. Those who signed the resolution the next day were Sens. Kent Conrad (D-N.D.), Jack Reed (D-RI), Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.), George V. Voinovich (R-Ohio) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Ark.). Sens.



Sen. Mark Pryor, D-Ariz., right, shakes hands last week in Washington with James Cameron, 91, thought to be the only living survivor of a lynching attempt in America.

Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) signed the resolution two days later and Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) three days later.

The resolution passed the Senate by "unanimous consent," meaning it did not require individual votes. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) rejected roll call votes that had been requested by the chief sponsors, and Mark Planning, an adviser to the Committee for a Formal Apology. Supporters had requested a vote during normal business hours, but Frist arranged for the vote to take place in the evening, after the major network news programs had aired in the East and Midwest. Frist's rejection of requests for a roll call vote protected opponents who did not want to be on record as opposing the reso-

lution.

Capitol Hill sources say four Senators — Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), Jim Bunning (R-Ky.), Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) — insisted that a recorded vote not be taken.

"America is home of the brave, but I'm afraid there may be a few cowards who have to cover to their very narrow-minded and backward, hateful constituency," Janet Langhart Cohen, a former journalist, said in an interview with ABC News.

"They're hiding out, and it's reminiscent of a pattern of hiding out under a hood, in the night, riding past, scaring people," said Cohen, who is the wife of William Cohen, a former Republican senator from Maine and former Sec-
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