

Cassidy guilty of involuntary manslaughter

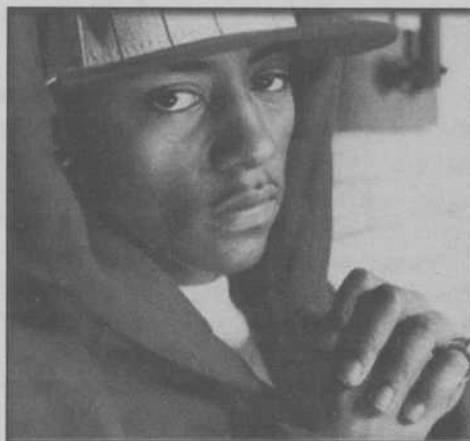
PHILADELPHIA (AP) - Baby-faced rapper Cassidy was convicted of involuntary manslaughter and aggravated assault Tuesday in what prosecutors called the planned ambush of a man who had argued with the musician's friends.

The 23-year-old Cassidy (real name: Barry Reese) was grossly negligent for supplying the guns that killed Desmond Hawkins and wounded two of his companions, Common Pleas Judge Jane Cutler Greenspan said at the end of a two-day non-jury trial.

Greenspan sentenced Cassidy to 11 1/2 to 23 months in prison. He has been in custody since his arrest in June, meaning he could be out of jail within a few months.

"You could be a leader in the community," Greenspan said.

"All those guns — that's why Desmond is gone now, because of all those guns."



Barry Reese, a.k.a. Cassidy, is currently in custody. He could be out in a few months.

Police said that four different guns, including an assault rifle, were involved in the April 15 ambush in an alley behind Cassidy's house. Cassidy and his associates had stashed

the guns around the alley in expectation of a shootout, prosecutors said.

Investigators also found ammunition for an AK-47 and other weapons inside the singer's rowhouse, which he shared with his girlfriend and 2-year-old son.

Witnesses testified that Hawkins, 22, had gone to Cassidy's home to act as a peacemaker after Hawkins and his friends got in an argument with Cassidy and his friends.

"It's a tragic situation for me too," Cassidy told the judge. "I didn't set up for this to happen. Desmond Hawkins was my friend ... one of my closest friends."

Cassidy's debut CD, "Split Personality," peaked at No. 2 on the Billboard album chart and featured the top 10 single "Hotel" featuring R. Kelly. Full Surface/J Records released the follow-up album "I'm a Hustla" on June 28.

His managers, who attended the trial, want him back to work soon on a third album.

"He's a natural performer. Very charismatic. We think he could be multiplatinum," Emio Zizza of J Records said.

Cassidy was convicted of one count of involuntary manslaughter, a misdemeanor; two counts of aggravated assault, both felonies; and possession of an instrument of crime.

Hawkins' companions, Bobby Hoyle and Daniel Irvin, were wounded in the shootout.

Police have arrest warrants for two others in Cassidy's camp, but have not found them, defense lawyer Fortunato Perri Jr. said.

Both Perri and the prosecutor said they were satisfied with the verdict. Prosecutors had sought a first-degree murder conviction, but were hampered by witnesses who recanted or recast their initial police statements.

Jackson debunks book claim of King quarrels

CHICAGO (AP) - The Rev. Jesse Jackson on Monday contested the assertion in a new Martin Luther King Jr. biography that he had a bitter split with the slain civil rights leader. Speaking to reporters after a breakfast held by his Rainbow/PUSH Coalition to commemorate King's birthday, Jackson denied that King accused him of trying to use the movement to promote himself. That claim was made in historian Taylor Branch's book "At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-68," which was released last week.

Asked about the passage in question, Jackson said King and his colleagues argued frequently about strategy but always came to a consensus afterward. "We often had challenging meetings," he said. "And that was what we did. But in the end we left there together."

In the book, Branch describes King storming out of a meeting with Jackson and other aides in a "fury" days before his death. The author quotes King as saying angrily to Jackson, "If you want to carve out your own niche in society, go ahead. But for God's sake, leave me out!"

Jackson said a heated argument did take place a few days before King's 1968

assassination. But as evidence there was no break between them, he distributed excerpts from the famous "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech that King delivered in Memphis on the eve of his death, mentioning Jackson by name.

After urging striking sanitation workers to boycott several corporations over their hiring policies, King said in that speech: "As Jesse Jackson has said, up to now, only the garbage men have been feeling pain. Now we must redistribute the pain."

Jackson said on Monday that those comments came "five minutes after the meeting Branch refers to. And if what he said is true, this wouldn't be here. That paragraph speaks for itself."

He said he holds Branch in "high regard" but was never interviewed for the book.

At the breakfast, attended by about 2,000 people, Jackson called King a "prophet" but said his "I Have a Dream" speech has yet to be fulfilled for Blacks.

"We are free, but not equal," Jackson said. "We are unequal in life expectancy, unequal in infant mortality, unequal in access to education."

Palestinian leadership resign after poll results

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) - Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia and his Cabinet ministers submitted their resignations Thursday as the Islamic militant group Hamas appeared to have captured a large majority of seats in the Palestinian elections — a shocking upset sure to throw Mideast peacemaking into turmoil.

"This is the choice of the people. It should be respected," Qureia said. "If it's true (the results), then the president should ask Hamas to form a new government. For me, personally, I sent my resignation."

Under the law, Abbas must ask the largest party in the new parliament — presumably Hamas — to form the next government. Abbas was elected separately a year ago and remains president.

Hamas said before the election it does not want to

govern alone, and would prefer to bring Fatah into a coalition. Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar said Thursday that the group will declare its intentions after official results are announced later in the day.

The result could have a devastating effect on the peace process with Israel. Mushir al-Masri, a senior Hamas official, said Thursday that recognizing Israel and negotiations with the Jewish state are "not on our agenda."

Israel and the United States have said they would not deal with a Hamas-led Palestinian government. Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas has said he would step down if he could no longer pursue his peace agenda with Israel.

Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz and top security officials convened Thursday to discuss the apparent Hamas victory. Israel's acting prime minister, Ehud Olmert, was to discuss the election results later with se-

nior Cabinet ministers and security officials.

Hamas' top candidate Ismail Haniyeh said the group had won about 70 seats in the 132-seat parliament, based on reporting by Hamas activists who observed the counting in the polling stations. Later in the day, another Hamas official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the number had risen to at least 75.

Officials with Fatah conceded that Hamas had won about 70 total seats. They also spoke on condition of anonymity because counting in some districts was continuing.

Palestinian election officials said on condition of anonymity because the count was ongoing that Hamas had won a large majority of the 66 seats up for grabs in electoral districts in the West Bank and Gaza. Half the seats in Wednesday's parliament vote were chosen on a national list and the other half by districts.

(See Resignations, Page 14)

Trails

(Continued from Page 1)

The trail allows visitors and locals the opportunity to learn how traditions and the various cultural aspects of Las Vegas were started and sustained.

Although the final 16 historical stops were selected by Wright, he made his decision after doing a great deal of research.

He and Gates selected a group of Las Vegas elders to interview. This allowed them to talk to people who actually had first-hand experience with the city in the past, they said.

"I used what the seniors said in the discussion and my

own knowledge of history and my conversations with (Las Vegas historian) Frank Wright (no relation)," Wright said.

The Pioneer Trail gives shine to historical landmarks like the Moulin Rouge, which was the first integrated hotel in Las Vegas.

The historical destination sites include Lorenzi Park on Washington Avenue, west of Rancho Drive; The Binion House on W. Bonanza at Tonopah; The McWilliams town site around "H" street in the heart of the Historic Westside; Jackson Street commercial district centered at "F" Street; and Harrison

Boarding House on "F" and Adams, a place where Black entertainers rented rooms during the city's period of segregation.

Some of the other designated points on the Pioneer Trail are the Christensen House, Moody House, Las Vegas Paiute Colony, Woodlawn Cemetery and the Kim Produce Farm.

"Las Vegas is losing a lot of its earlier sites and structures, and the history of the people who built this community will be lost. So, that's one of the reasons it's [Pioneer Trail] really important," Wright explained.

There are several histori-

cal points absent from the trail.

Wright said that the points selected, "were the ones that were the oldest," and he added, "We picked the ones that were the most important."

The Pioneer Trail may be expanded in the future to include more sites.

"Money left over will be used to provide addition to the trail," Wright advised.

For now, the 16 points on the Pioneer Trail are up and running. Those who visit, whether by driving, walking or bicycling, can get a peak inside a bit of Las Vegas's history.

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