

Plot to assassinate Cory Booker disclosed

By Glenn Townes
Special to Sentinel-Voice
NEW YORK (NNPA) - A plot to kill incoming Mayor Cory Booker by a group of imprisoned gang leaders at four New Jersey prisons was thwarted — at least for the time being — by state and local investigators, according to individuals associated with the investigation and published reports.

Two weeks ago, several letters and text messages were discovered in the prison

cell of convicted murderer and Bloods street gang leader Lester Alford, an inmate at East Jersey State Prison in Rahway. The letters were obtained by the *Star-Ledger* newspaper of Newark and excerpted in the *Press of Atlantic City*.

After discovering the letters, New Jersey state prison officials placed four state prison facilities under strict monitoring and “reduced activity.” The facilities targeted were East Jersey State, New-

ark Northern State Prison, New Jersey State Prison in Trenton and South Woods State Prison in Bridgeton.

In one message printed in the *Press*, inmate Alford wrote, “So we had a meeting by phone; I told him breathe easy, let’s set it off in the four prisons first, then get that dude.”

In another letter, Alford wrote, “If one prison does it before the other 3, it all spoils because they’ll lock every prison down immediately.

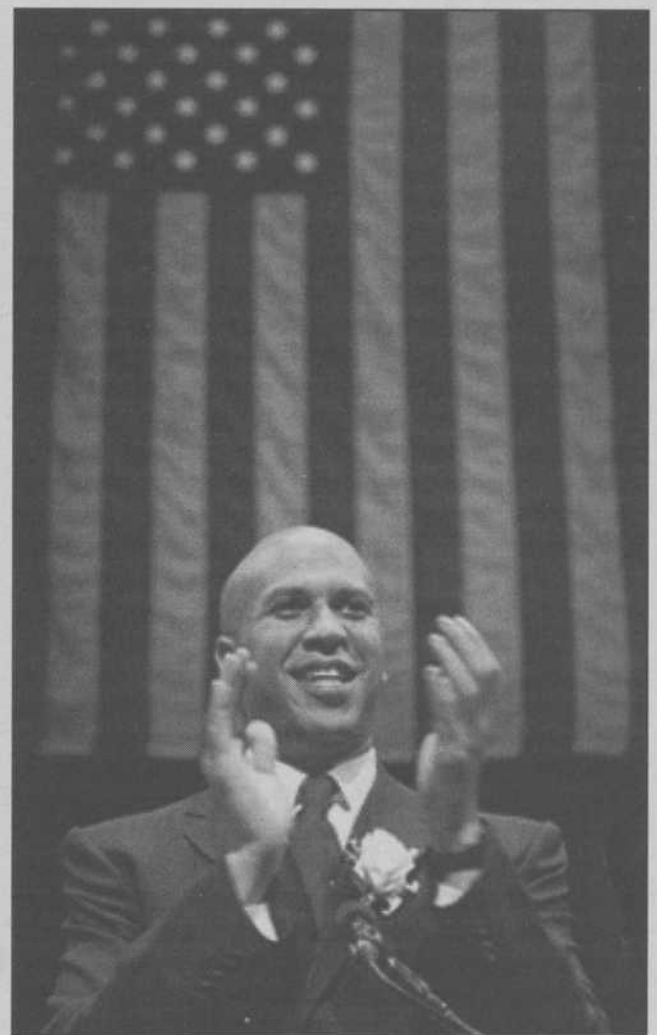
Everything is on position and waiting on my call!”

The letters also claimed there were 13 guns stashed at the prisons for use in a uniformed riot.

Officials surmise that inmates were planning a coordinated uprising at the four facilities as a distraction in order for gang members on the outside to target Booker for attack.

In a statement last week, Booker vowed not to back down from his daily agenda of implementing big changes for the city of Newark — most notably the elimination of gang activity. “I will not be intimidated or distracted from my goal to make sure that every Newarker is safe,” Booker said in a prepared statement. “I am looking forward to July 1 when I take office as mayor.”

While the exact motive for the gang-initiated assassination plot is unclear, some officials contend that Booker’s tough and unrelenting stance to rid Newark of violence and gang activity may be part of the reason. During his campaign, Booker said he would triple the size of the Newark PD’s



Newark, N.J. Mayor-elect Cory Booker is an up-and-comer.

gang unit. Currently, the unit has about a dozen officers.

Booker is currently under 24-hour police surveillance

and security efforts have been heightened indefinitely.

Glenn Townes writes for the *Amsterdam News*.

Rights groups to Congress: Extend vote act legislation

By George E. Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice
HOUSTON (NNPA) - A coalition of Black leaders, including National Urban League President Marc H. Morial and U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas), announced that beginning next Wednesday, they will hold a nightly vigil on Capitol Hill until Congress extends key provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 set to expire next year.

“Beginning on the 12th of July, on the steps of the United States Capitol [a coalition of civil rights groups] will sponsor what will be an ongoing vigil which will continue until such time as the Congress of the United States does the right thing and passes an extension of the Voting Rights Act,” Morial said at a news conference Monday in front of the Mickey Leland federal courthouse here.

“It’s only because of the Voting Rights Act that we desegregated Congress, state and local legislatures, city councils, school boards and legislative bodies across this country.”
— Ted Shaw, President-Counsel, NAACP-LDEF



Jackson Lee noted that as president, Lyndon B. Johnson, a Texan, leaned on federal lawmakers to pass the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Referring to George W. Bush, she said, “Now is the time for another Texan to stand up.”

The daily vigil on Capitol Hill is the first of several efforts aimed at pressuring Congress to act on the voting measure this year.

On July 29, the NAACP plans to hold voting rights rally in Washington, D.C. The NAACP and other groups are also organizing a letter-writing campaign, urging their federal lawmakers to act quickly on the proposed

measure and avoid tacking on amendments that would dilute the bill.

Ted Shaw, president and counsel-general of the NAACP Legal De-

fense and Educational Fund, warned about two “traps” being set up under the guise of expanding protection for Black voters. He said opponents are proposing that the Voting Rights Act be broadened to cover all states and that it be made permanent. Because the Supreme Court requires some showing of past discrimination before upholding a remedy, Shaw said, the actions would likely lead to the legislation being invalidated by the court.

The key provisions set to expire in 2007 include forcing covered districts to pre-clear major political changes with the Justice Department before putting them in effect, proving language assistance in certain districts where a significant number of voters are not proficient in English and providing federal poll watchers when needed.

Shaw said the Voting Rights Act has not only helped underrepresented groups, but made America a stronger, more inclusive country.

“It’s only because of the Voting Rights Act that we desegregated Congress, state and local legislatures, city councils, school boards and legislative bodies across this country,” he said. “And its work is not yet done.”

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THE REMATCH

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