

# Were alleged Black terrorists entrapped?

By Wendell P. Simpson  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

PHILADELPHIA (NNPA) - In the language of George Orwell's double speak, war is peace, truth is lies.

And 2006 is 1984.

In today's post-9/11 environment, Big Brother's prying eyes peer into your phone records, your Internet conversations and the intimate transactions of your life. And "thought crime," by the reckoning of some legal and law enforcement experts, is apparently a punishable offense.

While the Justice Department and the U.S. Attorney General's office touted last week's FBI bust of the Miami Seven as a significant victory in the war on terror, critics of the government's methods have suggested the raid was part of a "pre-

emptive" criminal justice policy that presumes guilt before the fact.

These same critics have suggested that the Miami Seven, or the Seas of David, as they called themselves, were nothing more than a bunch of loudmouth bozos who went around spouting anti-American rhetoric, and whose plan to blow up the Sears Tower in Chicago was hatched and encouraged by an FBI informant posing as an al-Qaeda operative.

So, now the question becomes were these men entrapped?

Is dissent a tangible criminal offense?

And if so, where is the hue and cry from the various human and civil rights groups, like the NAACP and the American Civil Liberties Union?

"There are groups like the

Ku Klux Klan and other White supremacist organizations that recruit over the Internet and talk loudly about taking certain actions," said former FBI counter-terrorist special agent Tyrone Powers. "Shouldn't they be charged under the same statutes as the Miami Seven?"

John White, director of communications for the national office of the NAACP, said the organization has contacted its office in Miami to get a feel for the situation there. But so far, White said, there has been no hue and cry from anyone regarding the case.

"It's premature," said White, "for us to have a take on this."

The ACLU, saying they weren't familiar enough yet with the case to comment, suggested the National Association of Criminal Defense

Lawyers might be able to help.

"I read the (federal) indictment this morning," said Jack King, an attorney with the Washington, D.C.-based lawyers group. "It was so thin, it was unbelievable."

King likens the Miami Seven to the 1968 Panther 21 case in which New York Black Panther Party members were indicted on charges of plotting to blow up the New York Botanical Gardens and several department stores.

King called the Panther case a classic example of police infiltration and frame-up linked to COINTELPRO, the government's '60s-era program designed to disrupt domestic dissent.

"The Panther 21, unlike the Oakland (Calif.) Panthers, were slackers who were infiltrated by a rookie

cop. The cop was the only one plotting to do anything. Those guys were totally and completely inept."

King said the Panther 21 were held without bond for 25 months before being acquitted by a New York jury after 45 minutes of deliberations.

"These guys in Miami, all they did was talk," said King. "They marched around the neighborhood in fatigues. They were eccentric and different and somebody called the cops and dropped a dime on them."

"But one look at the indictment and you know," King said. "It looks like these guys were never going to do anything."

The Seas of David has been portrayed as a cult that

professed to a convoluted doctrine of Christianity loosely sprinkled with a seasoning of pseudo-Islamic dogma.

The gang made no secret about their discontent with some U.S. policies. That made them conspicuous in the dangerous Miami ghetto of Liberty City, where weary neighbors are constantly on the alert.

It was that conspicuousness which brought them the unwanted attention of the authorities.

In a federal indictment handed down last Thursday, Miami Seven were charged with conspiring with al-Qaeda to "levy war against the United States, and to oppose by force the authority

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## Schedule set in Texas redistricting

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) - A federal panel gave both sides in Texas' redistricting fight more time to propose fixes to a congressional district whose borders were ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. U.S. District Judge T. John Ward said proposed changes to the map are due by July 14. Oral arguments were scheduled for Aug. 3 in Austin.

Last week, The Supreme Court upheld most of the pro-Republican Texas congressional map but tossed the 23rd Congressional District, which stretches from San

Antonio to Laredo and west almost to El Paso. It remanded its redrawing to a three-judge panel.

The GOP-controlled Legislature redrew the map in 2003 to put more Republicans in office. Democrats and minority groups sued the state, accusing Republicans of an unconstitutional power grab in drawing boundaries that booted four Democrats from office. Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott argued that the new boundaries reflect the preferences of Texas voters.

The high court did not set

a deadline for a new map, but changes would have to be made soon to be effective in the November general election.

Gov. Rick Perry said he prefers the Legislature make redistricting decisions. But Perry, who has authority to call lawmakers into session, said he would wait for the court's decision.

"To play a lot of what-ifs is not great," he said.

The court objected to 100,000 Hispanics living in Webb County being shifted into a neighboring district. Any remedy would likely re-

quire the inclusion of more Hispanics in the district and would require slight changes to surrounding districts.

"We want to be sure that Latino voters have a voice in congressional elections in this state," said Nina Perales, an attorney for the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund who argued the portion of the redistricting case that was upheld by the Supreme Court. "We're going to be proposing a plan that allows Latino voters to express their preferences in future congressional elections."

## GOP

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photo ID to vote. Whose vote is it going to suppress? It's going to suppress the Black vote. Republicans, especially Southern Republicans, don't want Black voters to vote."

Civil rights activists remember what that was like.

There were only 300 Black elected officials in 1965 when the act was passed, according to the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

By 1970, the number jumped to 1,469 and is now at 9,500. Even so, that's still approximately 2 percent of all elected officials in the U.S.

Congress first amended and strengthened the Voting Rights Act in 1982, when it was first set to expire, and then extended it for 25 years — until 2007. Sections 5 and 203 are set to expire next year. If the House and Senate approves, the reauthorization would be for 25 more years.

"Nothing is more important than preserving the expiring provisions," says Barbara Arnwine, executive director of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law. "We all know that the legislative process is

slow and the 109th Congress has already held more than a dozen hearings and amassed voluminous evidence supporting renewal of the Voting Rights Act... We've already seen a legislative process that is fraught with hurdles and there's active opposition to this reauthorization. And it is critical, therefore, that we act as soon as possible."

Ted Shaw, president and director counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, says the Republican uprising did not surprise him.

"The history of discrimination has included repeated attempts to either suppress or take away by disenfranchisement the right to vote for members of racial minority groups," he recalls.

"Without Section 5, minorities would lose their primary vehicle for redressing any discrimination to which they are subjected at the ballot box.

"And if section 5 and the other provisions that expire in 2007 are not reauthorized, we would see the clocks roll back by decades of progress. And our nation's unfortunate history of discrimination in polling places might be resurrected," Shaw said.

## Ex-KKK president beaten in Indiana

SPENCERVILLE, Ind. (AP) - A former Ku Klux Klan leader who held a Louisville television news crew hostage in his home seven years ago was found severely beaten after apparently getting into a fight with his son.

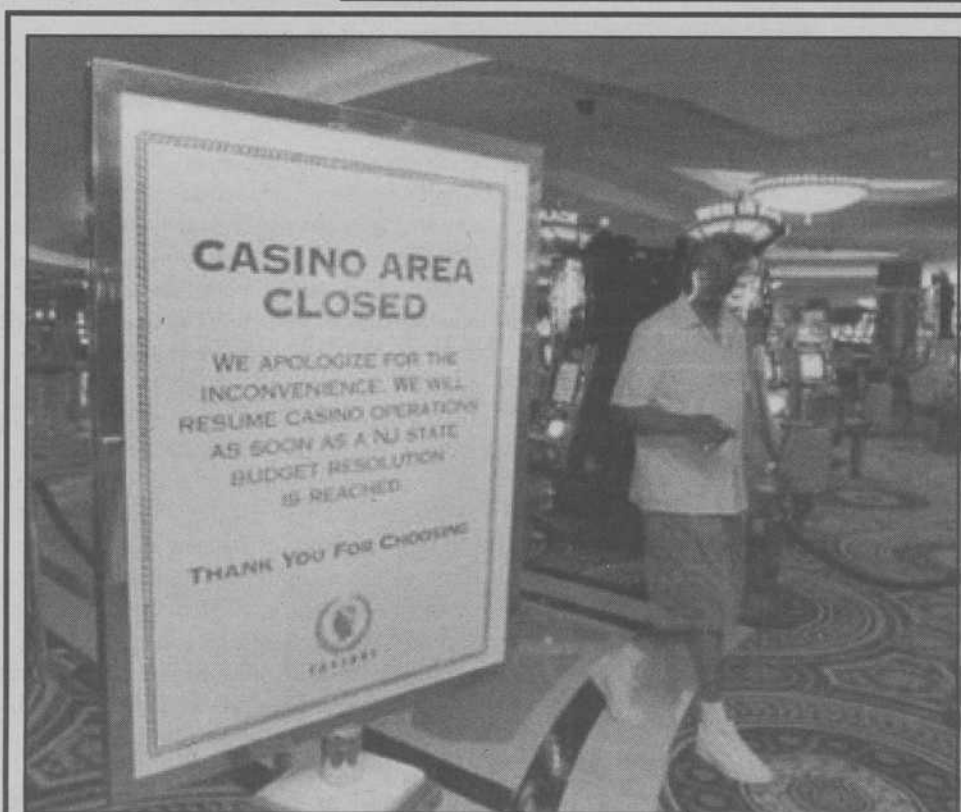
Jeffrey Lynn Berry of Harlan was listed in critical but stable condition in a Fort Wayne hospital after the attack Saturday at a home east of Spencerville, Ind.

Police believe his son, Anthony, is responsible for the attack. However, no arrests have been made at this time.

Police say Jeff Berry sustained internal head injuries in the fight.

Berry formerly led the DeKalb County-based American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. He pleaded guilty in 2001 to charges that he held WHAS TV reporter George Sells IV and camerawoman Heidi Thiel against their will in November 1999.

He spent three years in prison before being released in 2004.



## THE DAY THE SLOTS STOPPED

A sign of apology sits on the casino floor at Caesars in Atlantic City, N.J., on Wednesday. A budget crisis in the state legislature has forced the closing of Atlantic City's 12 casinos. Lawmakers had hoped to avoid shuttering the casino industry.