

Mayor of Jackson, Miss., indicted in attack

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) - Mayor Frank Melton, who has been accused of being too heavy-handed in fighting crime, was indicted last Friday on charges he directed young people to use sledgehammers to smash up a home where he suspected drugs were being used.



Frank Melton, the indicted mayor of Jackson, Miss., faces various charges, including home burglary.

The charges included malicious mischief, home burglary and carrying a gun on school property.

Prosecutors said convictions on all charges would carry up to 50 years in prison.

Two police officers who served as Melton's bodyguards were also indicted.

All three were released after posting bail.

Their surrender came a day after Hinds County prosecutors announced that a grand jury would review allegations stemming from the destruction of a duplex on Aug. 26 and a fight in a nightclub the same night.

The officers were reassigned within the police department, according to a statement released last Friday on Chief Shirlene Anderson's letterhead.

Melton's attorney, former Jackson Mayor Dale Danks, said Melton was trying to rid Jackson of crime, and damage was done to a "drug house."

"Maybe better judgment could've been used but the charges that have been made against Mayor Melton are an extreme and excessive reaction," Danks said.

Sheriff Malcolm McMillin has said his department investigated allegations that Melton directed a group of young people to knock out walls of a duplex with sledgehammers and that the mayor and his entourage then attacked a club manager.

The grand jury did not apparently address the nightclub incident.

Evans Welch, 45, who lived in the wrecked duplex, was arrested on charges of possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia.

Mississippi Attorney General Jim Hood, who helped present evidence to the grand jury, said his office will offer Melton a plea deal. Hood wouldn't release details of the deal but told reporters: "If we're able to resolve it by resignation and a plea, that would be the best thing."

Some City Council members said Melton should re-

sign if convicted.

Melton, a former state drug enforcement agency chief, was elected on a tough-on-crime platform.

He has drawn national attention for his unconventional leadership style — including participating in police raids and roadblocks — in the city of 184,000.

The American Civil Liberties Union last month accused Melton, who is Black, of civil rights violations, including racial profiling.

The city is nearly 71 percent Black.

White

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that American laws and institutions are fair and treat everyone equally."

The researchers did a telephone survey of more than 2,000 homes nationwide. Of the participants, 1,000 were White, while the remaining participants were a combination of Blacks, Hispanics and other racial groups.

The study also showed that Republican, White males are "less likely to believe laws and institutions are important and more likely to believe laws and institutions are not important in explaining White advantage."

That finding doesn't surprise Julia Hare, executive director of the San Francisco-based Black Think Tank.

"Any Whites denying White privilege are either in total denial or pathological liars," Hare said.

She further stated: "We know that every day, anyone at any age would be able to see that. All you have to do [is] pass a newspaper stand... a magazine rack... turn on your television at any time of the day... visit [corporations], and see who has the top jobs... Those who are making the decisions are White... When we see that most mayors, most governors, most sheriffs, most of the people with the high jobs in our society, you don't call that White privilege? What else could that be?"

Eddie Moore Jr. should know. He is the director of diversity at the Bush School in Seattle and organizer of the annual "White Privilege Conference."

The conference, to be held next April 18-21 at the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, is heading into its 8th year and draws hundreds of scholars, students and people who study race relations.

"It's not a 'Kumbaya' diversity conference; everybody's not in full agreement on issues, but we really worked hard to create a space where folks could come and talk about tough issues and do it in a way that's positive and productive," Moore said.

Like Hale, Moore was also interested in the study's ability to narrow the views of White, Republican males.

"Once you begin to break down the variables of how people are responding and who [is] responding, I think that becomes very interesting to me because it allows us to see where some of the challenges lie in continuing to do the work into the 21st century," Moore said.

Another key element of the study, according to Hartmann, was Whites and how they

viewed their racial identity.

The study showed that 77 percent of Whites reported that their racial identity was important to them and their racial group has a culture that should be preserved, a statistic that also surprised researchers, according to Hartmann.

Southern Whites tended to hold those views the most, said the study.

"Seventy-five percent of Whites answering affirmatively sounds like a big number — it is — but it's also way less (than) like 85-90 percent of African-Americans and Hispanics (who) say 'absolutely its important, absolutely we have a culture worth preserving.' So, it's a big number for Whites compared to the fact that we thought Whites didn't think about it at all," Hartmann said.

Generally, Hartmann said sociologists believe Whites don't want to associate themselves with a race, or just preferred to consider themselves as "American."

He said there have been two responses to the study so far, one that reads the statistics as White Americans looking to find their place in the "American Mosaic," while others believe the numbers show White Americans afraid of the darkening of America as other ethnic groups rise in population and political power.

Hartmann, who is White, believes it's a little of both and this study is just the beginning of a greater examination of how White people think about their own race.

"The larger implication of all of this and of the study as a whole... if we're going to think about it properly, much less benign, to solve those problems... we've got to have the majority White group fully informed, invested and involved in recognizing how they're implicated in racial dynamics."

Moore also agrees that this study is the beginning of a good dialogue among the races, and "part" of him is excited that White people "are beginning to show an indication that their awareness and knowledge around these issues are improving."

But, he is also disheartened that many "don't see the connection to the systemic, institutional design."

Moore, an African-American, said it is not enough for White people to just recognize their advantages, but to take it another step further and take action to equal the playing field for all Americans.

"I want to give you some praise for getting to that point," he said. "But for me that is not enough."

CCSD

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mascot at Clark High School. Such trivia may seem unimportant, but these interesting facts play a big part in the district's history.

Cadwallader, who is also namesake of a middle school, said, "We thought it would be interesting for students to see not only when a school was built, but to also learn about the people who attended these schools and have become well known in the community or the nation."

Tanaka said, "This school district has produced statesmen, senators, attorneys, doctors, lawyers, teachers, business people... We're trying to ignite the passion

of the people who can tell the stories of what happened at these schools. And let's not forget the students who have [sacrificed] for this community."

Upcoming events include a namesake reception where all honorees will share their memories, experiences and keepsakes with the district.

The district will announce when the time capsule display will be unveiled, culminating the yearlong celebration.

The organizer's want it to be full of memorabilia and artifacts related to CCSD history. For more information, visit www.ccsd.net, or call Rick Watson at 260-9946 about memorabilia donations.

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