

Simpson book, show nixed

NEW YORK (AP) - O.J. Simpson's book and TV special were canceled Monday, an astonishing end to an imaginary confession that had sickened the public as the very worst kind of tabloid sensation.

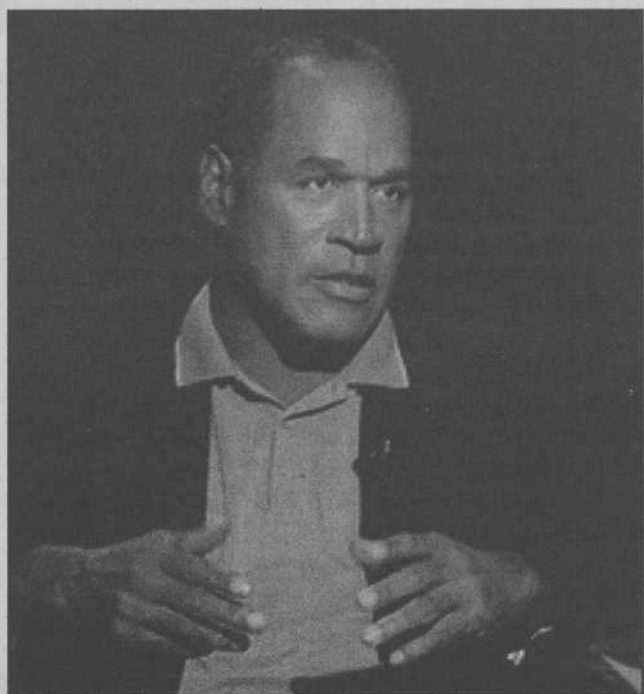
"I and senior management agree with the American public that this was an ill-considered project," said Rupert Murdoch, whose News Corp. owns both Fox Broadcasting and publisher HarperCollins. "We are sorry for any pain that this has caused the families of Ron Goldman and Nicole Brown Simpson."

"If I Did It," in which Simpson was to have described how he would have killed his ex-wife, had been scheduled to air as a two-part interview Nov. 27 and Nov. 29 on Fox. The book was to have followed on Nov. 30.

HarperCollins spokesperson Erin Crum said some copies had already been shipped to stores but would be recalled, and all copies would be destroyed.

"I think News Corp. finally stepped up, admitted they made a mistake and did the right thing," said Jonathan Polak, the lawyer for Fred Goldman, Ron's father. "This is everything we have been asking News Corp. to do for the past two weeks. We want to thank the American people for helping make this happen."

Simpson's attorney, Yale Galanter, told The Associated Press: "We had known for



This undated promotional photo, released by Fox Television, shows O.J. Simpson during an exclusive interview with publisher Judith Regan (not pictured).

three or four days that this was a possibility."

Galanter said he did not know whether the deal between Simpson and News Corp. was contingent on a TV interview being shown or a book arriving in stores.

"There are only three possible reactions: anger, happiness or indifference. He's totally indifferent about the fact that it's been canceled," said Galanter, who added that he didn't know if Simpson received compensation up front.

Simpson told The Associated Press in a phone interview late Monday he could not comment on the situation "until I know legally where I stand."

He added, "I would like nothing better than to straighten out some things that have been mischaracterized. But I think I'm legally muzzled at this point."

Any hopes of commercial reward were quickly overwhelmed by near universal revulsion to last week's announcement — from those who knew Goldman and Brown, from booksellers and advertisers, even from Fox News Channel personality Bill O'Reilly.

A dozen Fox network affiliates had already said they would not air the two-part sweeps month special, and numerous stores either had declined to sell the book or

had promised to donate any profits to charity.

"I really don't think there would have been very many advertisers who would have been willing to participate in this show," said Brad Adgate of the ad buying firm Horizon Media.

With little advertising, Fox would miss the chance to profit from the show. If there were no advertisers, the show wouldn't even be rated by Nielsen Media Research — so the number of people watching would have done nothing to help Fox's season average, he said.

The cancellation was a stunning setback for ReganBooks — an imprint of HarperCollins — and Judith Regan, who had labeled the book and interview Simpson's "confession." She insisted that she had done it not for money, but as a victim of domestic violence anxious to face down a man she believed got away, literally, with murder.

ReganBooks is known for gossipy best-sellers such as Jose Canseco's "Juiced" and Jenna Jameson's "How to Make Love Like a Porn Star."

The Simpson interview (See O.J., Page 7)

Ex-Panther dies in exile in Cuba

HAVANA (AP) - William Lee Brent, a Black Panther who hijacked a passenger jet to communist Cuba in 1969 and spent 37 years in exile, has died on the island, his sister said. He was 75.

Brent died Nov. 4 from bronchial pneumonia, Elouise Rawlins said in a telephone interview from her home in Oakland, Calif.

Rawlins said she learned of her brother's death through telephone calls and messages from friends and acquaintances, but has not received official word from the U.S. or Cuban governments.

Rawlins said she had not seen her brother since he used a handgun to hijack TWA Flight 154 from San Francisco to Havana on June 17, 1969, but said they stayed in contact through e-mails and telephone calls.

"We didn't even know he was ill," Rawlins said. "I don't know about the burial or anything — just that he passed away."

The telephone rang unanswered Friday at Brent's Havana home, which he shared with his wife, travel writer Jane McManus, until her death last year. They had met and married in Cuba.

Brent lived a relatively isolated life during his nearly four decades in Cuba, spending much of his time in his later years listening to his beloved jazz music collection in his apartment.

In a 1996 interview with The Associated Press, he said he missed the United States and the American Black community. But he was unwilling to return home to face certain life imprisonment for aircraft piracy and kidnapping, and had resigned himself to never seeing his country again.

"I miss my people, the struggle, the body language," Brent told the AP. "The Black community in Cuba is very different."

Still, he said he had no regrets about hijacking the (See Panther, Page 11)

AFL-CIO mobilizes help toward male minorities

By Lorinda M. Bullock
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - The AFL-CIO, the nation's largest labor organization, announced a new nationwide initiative that will provide job training and job opportunities for young Black men. They also announced their Mobilization for Young Men of Color initiative would start in the predominately Black and Hurricane Katrina-ravaged New Orleans.

It's a response to former Congressman Ron Dellums Commission's latest series of reports, including "A Way Out: Creating Partners for Our Nation's Prosperity By Expanding Life Paths of Young Men of Color." Its goal was to give public and private sectors recommendations on how to reverse the

negative social, economic and educational trends happening among young men of color.

"It was an amazing moment," said Gail Christopher, the director of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies' Health Policy Institute. The Washington-based think tank sponsored the commission's reports.

"It had all these burly, robust, tall, labor guys standing there saying, 'We have to take our country back, and it starts with young men of color. It was amazing,'" she said recently.

According to the commission's report that was also released last week, it's going to take efforts of large groups like the AFL-CIO and many others to save minority males, especially African-

Americans, who account for the worst high school graduation and mortality rates in comparison to their White counterparts.

The commission reported, "more than 29 percent of African-American males who are 15 years old today are more likely to go to prison at some point in their lives compared to 4.4 percent of White males of the same age."

Christopher said a number of issues have to be addressed in order to end the "pipeline" to prison, and the commission recommendations try to tackle the underlying issues that hinder the progress and success of young minority men.

"We've put policies in place that exacerbate that historic problem: We expel them (See AFL-CIO, Page 11)

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