

# Prosecutions going forth for New Orleans suspects

NEW ORLEANS (AP) - The number of suspects set free because of delays by the prosecutor's office has dropped dramatically since the departure of Eddie Jordan as district attorney, officials said recently.

Orleans Parish, where crime has soared after Hurricane Katrina, released about 2,000 suspects of crimes ranging from drug possession to murder in 2006 and 2007 because the district attorney's office didn't indict them within 60 days of arrest.

The number of such releases in January 2007 alone was 580. That number fell to six in December, just weeks after Jordan was forced out.

Jordan, the parish's first Black district attorney, resigned after a multimillion-dollar judgment was awarded to 36 White or Hispanic employees in his office who alleged they were fired and replaced by Blacks. He had already come under fire as high-profile cases fell apart, veteran prosecutors left, and the crime rate soared.

Although the police superintendent, Warren Riley, and Jordan's replacement, Keva Landrum-Johnson, downplayed the role of the leadership change, Riley did say Landrum-Johnson was the difference.

"There was a point where Mr. Jordan appointed Ms.

Landrum the screening chief," Riley said. "When Ms. Landrum took over, that's when we began to see changes. So we saw progress a couple of months before Mr. Jordan resigned."

A 10-point program set up in March 2007 includes having an assistant district attorney available for consultation around the clock, better communication between police and prosecutors, and steps to make sure officers are in court to testify for trials.

In addition, Landrum-Johnson's decision to accept "field trials" in drug arrests — preliminary drug testing done by officers at the point of arrest — has allowed suspects to be charged sooner, Landrum-Johnson said.

The return of the crime lab, which had been wiped out by Hurricane Katrina, was also a major factor, Riley said. Police will now test evidence against those released earlier, and they could be re-arrested, he said.

# Stunning move: Judge plans jury probe in court

BOSTON (AP) - One juror, a White woman, was trying to convince the others that the murder victim had been bruised during a struggle, not during consensual sex with the defendant. Bruises like those, the juror supposedly said, can happen "when a big Black guy beats up on a small woman."

Another juror, a Black woman, took offense and accused her of racism. Things got so heated that the two women had to be separated.

Now, more than a year after the defendant, a Black garbage man, was convicted of stabbing to death a White fashion writer on Cape Cod, the judge has taken the highly unusual step of summoning the entire jury back to court next week to testify publicly about whether racism infected the deliberations.

Depending on what he finds out, the judge could order a new trial.

Questioning jurors in open court about their deliberations after a verdict is extremely rare. Jury deliberations are considered almost sacrosanct.

"It's extraordinary," said Jonathan Turley, a law professor at George Washington University, who warned that forc-

ing jurors to testify could have a chilling effect.

"The jury system depends on jurors being open and frank in their views. We protect the sanctity of the jury room for that reason," he said.

Christopher McCowen, 34, was convicted in November 2006 in the rape and fatal stabbing of Christa Worthington, 46, a writer who had covered fashion in New York and Paris before moving to the small town of Truro.

McCowen, who was Worthington's trash collector, claimed that he had consensual sex with her but that his friend killed her.

Race permeated the case from the first day of the trial, when McCowen's attorney, Robert George, accused authorities of focusing unfairly on McCowen.

"It's based on an assumption — a false assumption — that a Vassar-educated, 46-year-old, world-traveling, wealthy heiress could not possibly have had consensual sex with a Black, uneducated, troubled garbage man," George said.

The jury initially reported a deadlock but convicted McCowen two days later, (See Attitudes, Page 11)

## Kenya

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ment, a vote recount and a new poll as possible options to end a crisis that has dented Kenya's reputation for stability in volatile east Africa.

Kenya is an ally in the United States' war on terrorism and has turned over dozens of people to the U.S. and Ethiopia as suspected terrorists.

The country allows American forces to operate from Kenyan bases and conducts joint exercises with U.S. troops in the region.

Washington said the top U.S. African envoy sent to Kenya, Jendayi Frazer, spoke to Kibaki about the move.

"The perception was he was trying to put in place a political fait accompli," U.S. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack told reporters. "We expressed our displeasure; we were quite disappointed by the action."

Kibaki told Frazer the step was intended only to keep the government running while there was a negotiated political settlement to the crisis, McCormack said.

The U.S. also is a major donor to Kenya, long seen as a stable democracy in a region that includes war-ravaged Somalia and Sudan. Aid amounts to roughly \$1 billion a year, said U.S. Embassy spokesman T.J. Dowling.

U.S. presidential candidate Barack Obama — whose late father was Kenyan — called Odinga to urge a peaceful resolution. Obama spokesman Robert Gibbs said the senator spoke to Odinga Monday afternoon for about five minutes before going into a rally in New Hampshire.

Odinga said on British Broadcasting Corp. radio that Obama's father was his maternal uncle, and that Obama called him twice "in the midst of his campaigning ...to express his concern and to say that he is also going to call President Kibaki so that Kibaki agrees to find a negotiated, satisfactory solution to this problem."

According to a Kenyan government website, Kibaki won 4,584,721 votes or 47 percent of the ballots cast, against Odinga's 4,352,993, or 44 percent. However, even the chairman of the country's electoral commission has said he is not sure Kibaki won. Frazer also said that the vote count at the heart of the dispute was tampered with and both sides could have been involved.

Odinga's party won 95 parliament seats and Kibaki's party 43 in legislative elections held the same day as the presidential elections, meaning it will be difficult for Kibaki to govern without making some overture to Odinga.

Odinga rejected Kibaki's recent invitation to talk, saying it was "public relations gimmickry" and that Kibaki was "trying to deflect attention from and undermine" international mediation.

Martha Karua, who has just been reappointed as justice minister, said the opposition should take its complaints to the courts. "I am certain they have no evidence upon which a credible court can nullify a Kibaki win," Karua said.

President Bush and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown offered support to the AU effort.

A group of four former African heads of state met with Kibaki and Odinga in separate meetings this week.

## Your Horoscope Says... January 10-16

### ARIES

An unexpected clash may arise this week from an unlikely area. Try to maintain a position as mediator, rather than joining the fray. Loyalties may be stretched, but they won't break. What you need is within you. Go there and get it.

Soul Affirmation: My spirit will fill me with gladness.

Lucky Numbers: 14, 37, 44

### TAURUS

Co-workers or customers may be grumpy this week. Don't take it personally. Dwell in your peaceful inner space and the space around you will reflect the peaceful vibrations.

Soul Affirmation: Jewelry reflects the beauty of my feelings about myself.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 45, 51

### GEMINI

You feel centered this week and full of efficient energy. Use this week to accomplish tasks, make plans, and finalize arrangements that need to be made. Face into personal responsibilities with love and pleasure now.

Soul Affirmation: I enjoy discovering new territory this week.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 15, 29

### CANCER

You can build a bridge with your imagination to reach the person you want to meet. Build the very best bridge your imagination can afford. Your soulmate will then cross over to you. Your intentions are warm and sincere.

Soul Affirmation: Being true to others is the way to be true to myself.

Lucky Numbers: 13, 19, 40

### LEO

You need to relax. The urge to do everything will take a toll on you this week unless you make a concerted effort to slow your own vibes down. Think peace love and happiness and let them be real values for you. Feed your soul.

Soul Affirmation: I calm my emotions by forgetting about the past.

Lucky Numbers: 23, 31, 50

### VIRGO

You'll be efficient and productive this week if you got some rest. Slow down. Sometimes less is more, and you'll see you're doing better than most. Use your talents to create some free time for yourself.

Soul Affirmation: I go inside myself to find peace and joy this week.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 20, 41

### LIBRA

Someone wants to argue, and it's up to you to walk away. It's easy to let go of any idea of control if you remember that you are only responsible for your own feelings. Act healthy this week and enjoy your life.

Soul Affirmation: As chances come around again, I take advantage of them.

Lucky Numbers: 27, 33, 36

### SCORPIO

Be flexible as others present changes and new schedules for a group activity. Your easy-going attitude will allow you to reschedule appointments easily. Watch the sun rise. It will be good for your spirits!

Soul Affirmation: I release internal pressure by enjoying the beauties of the world around me.

Lucky Numbers: 22, 26, 34

### SAGITTARIUS

Give your busy brain a rest and work your body this week. It's a great day for physical activity that can loosen up muscles and relieve tensions. You'll receive some practical advice from a distant relative.

Soul Affirmation: Newness of outlook helps me deal with the monotony of life

Lucky Numbers: 2, 16, 25

### CAPRICORN

Family responsibilities may feel like a chore this week. If you relinquish control of the situation, a natural order will occur, and things will organize themselves. You can let people be who they are.

Soul Affirmation: I call on my creative talents to pay my bills.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 9, 42

### AQUARIUS

A secret may be revealed in a casual conversation. Your confidence is valued and appreciated. Take it all in! There's no returning to what has been once you realize the gift you've been given.

Soul Affirmation: Helping others is the true measure of my worth.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 30, 38

### PISCES

A friend from the past could suddenly appear in your life. This could be a highly beneficial reunion for both of you. Let bygones be bygones, and renew this friendship. Love isn't used up just because it's shared.

Soul Affirmation: Charm is my middle name this week.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 17, 21