

Does Acquittal Damage Race Relations?

SANFORD, Fla. (AP) — Nearly 70 years after Jackie Robinson was run out of town, Sanford is absorbing what some see as another blow to race relations: the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the killing of Trayvon Martin.

Some black residents of this community of almost 50,000 people where the shooting took place say that while relations between black and white have improved over the years, progress has been slow and the Martin case demonstrated that problems persist.

James Tillman, who is black, said Saturday's verdict just adds to his mistrust of local authorities, who have been criticized over the years for their handling of other crimes against blacks. Tillman, 47, said city officials try to portray Sanford as a "quiet and laid-back town."

"This town here is one of the worst towns about covering things up," Tillman said, stopping his bike in front of a memorial to the 17-year-old Martin. "When you put something in the closet, it's going to burst back on you."

Sanford, a mostly middle-class suburb of Orlando, about 25 miles away, has reacted somberly — and peacefully — to the verdict. The city was mostly silent the morning after the verdict, in contrast to the rallies that drew thousands not long after the shooting.

Official: No Sides Being Taken In Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — The most senior U.S. official to visit Egypt since its elected president was ousted said Monday that Washington is committed to helping the Arab country succeed in its "second chance" at democracy, adding this can only happen with the participation of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Deputy Secretary of State William Burns' meetings with Egypt's interim leaders came as thousands of supporters of deposed President Mohammed Morsi held another mass rally to demand his return to office. The protest turned violent as police fired tear gas at pro-Morsi protesters who burned tires, threw rocks and blocked traffic flow on a main roadway running through the heart of the capital.

The remarks by Burns, the No. 2 American diplomat, signaled that Washington, while calling for an inclusive transition, is moving on from Morsi and his Brotherhood group.

Burns insisted that the United States is not taking sides in deeply polarized Egypt, saying it is not Washington's policy, "as outsiders, to support particular political personalities and particular parties."

"What we're going to continue to try to do is to support an open inclusive, tolerant democratic process," Burns said. "We hope it will be a chance to learn some of the lessons and correct some of the mistakes of the last two years."

Woman Gets Prison For Lying About Role

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — A federal judge on Monday sentenced a New Hampshire woman to the maximum 10 years in prison for lying about her role in the 1994 Rwanda genocide, saying the United States cannot be a haven for those who slaughter out of hatred and ignorance.

Rwanda native Beatrice Munyenyezi declined her right to address the court after U.S. District Judge Steven McAuliffe imposed her sentence.

Munyenyezi, 43, was convicted in February of entering the United States and securing citizenship by lying about her role as a commander of one of the notorious roadblocks where Tutsis were singled out for slaughter. She also denied affiliation with any political party, despite her husband's leadership role in the extremist Hutu militia party.

"She was not a mere spectator," McAuliffe said. "I find this defendant was actively involved, actively participated, in the mass killing of men, women and children simply because they were Tutsis."

McAuliffe acknowledged she has led a crime-free and productive life since her arrival in New Hampshire in 1998 but said it was a life lived under false pretenses.

Child Pulled From Sand Dune Doing Well

CHICAGO (AP) — One minute, 6-year-old Nathan Woessner was scampering up a massive dune in northern Indiana with his dad and a friend. He was gone the next, without a warning or sound.

More than three hours later, rescuers pulled Nathan out from under 11 feet of sand on Friday. He showed no signs of life: He was cold to the touch, had no pulse and wasn't breathing. His limp body was put into the back of a pickup truck, which started toward a waiting ambulance.

The plan was to take him to the hospital rather than the coroner's office, even if he was dead, in order to "give the family and rescue workers hope," La Porte (Ind.) County Chief Deputy Coroner Mark Huffman said Monday.

As the truck bounced over the dune, a medic noticed something astonishing: The boy took a breath. Then, the cut on his head started bleeding. The jolt apparently shocked Nathan's body back to life, Huffman said. Nathan was rushed to the hospital and was crying in the emergency room when Huffman arrived a few minutes later.

"Man, I tell you that was such a great feeling," Huffman said. "This is not something that I as the chief deputy coroner get to report that often. It's an absolute miracle this child survived."

Syrian Refugees Confront Egypt Turmoil

CAIRO (AP) — Egyptian officials turn back a plane load of Syrians at Cairo airport. A popular presenter on Egyptian television warns Syrians to steer clear of protests or face the consequences. An Egyptian state school refuses admission to Syrian children.

Once welcomed with open arms in Egypt, many of the tens of thousands of Syrians who took refuge here from the civil war at home have now found themselves targets of hate speech and intimidation. Their dramatic change in fortune is one of the unexpected consequences of the Egyptian military's ouster of President Mohammed Morsi, whose Islamist-dominated government offered them favorable conditions.

The shift could have a profound impact on the lives of Syrians in Egypt as they currently find themselves in a sort of legal limbo, waiting to see where the political winds will drop them. In what many see as a hint of what lies ahead, Egypt's new military-backed interim government already has imposed new travel restrictions.

That has spooked many Syrians who fear their current visas won't be renewed and they could be forced to leave Egypt. Many have invested their savings in businesses or simply cannot return to their war-ravaged cities.

More Tests Needed For 'Glee' Actor

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The cause of "Glee" actor Cory Monteith's death remained unclear Monday, and authorities in Canada said it could take several days before toxicology test results are in.

Vancouver police Sgt. Randy Fincham said there's nothing to indicate the death was due to illicit drug use.

Monteith, 31, was found dead in his Vancouver, British Columbia, hotel room on Saturday, according to police, who have ruled out foul play.

Police said Monteith had been out with people earlier, but video and electronic records from the hotel indicated he returned to his room by himself early Saturday. He was believed to be alone when he died.

Twinkies May Be Smaller Than Before

NEW YORK (AP) — Twinkies are back, but they may be a bit smaller than you remember.

The new boxes hitting shelves this week list the spongy yellow cakes as having 270 calories and a weight of 77 grams for two cakes, or 135 calories and 38.5 grams for one cake.

Right before it went out of business, the predecessor company had told The Associated Press that Twinkies were 150 calories per cake. Photos of past boxes online also indicate the weight to have been 42.5 grams per cake.

A spokeswoman for Hostess, Hannah Arnold, said in an email Monday that the size change was made in "mid-2012" by the predecessor company. That would mean it happened in the months leading up to its bankruptcy, as the company was trying to keep its head above water financially.

AG Calls Martin Killing An 'Unnecessary Shooting'

BY PETE YOST AND CURT ANDERSON

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Attorney General Eric Holder on Monday called the killing of Trayvon Martin a "tragic, unnecessary shooting," and said the Justice Department will follow "the facts and the law" as it reviews evidence to see whether federal criminal charges are warranted.

In his first comments since the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the Martin case, Holder said the 17-year-old's death provides an opportunity for the nation to speak honestly about complicated and emotionally charged issues. He said the nation must not forgo an opportunity toward better understanding of one another.

"I hope that we will approach this necessarily difficult dialogue with the same dignity that those who have lost the most, Trayvon's parents, have demonstrated throughout the last year — and especially over the past few days," Holder said. "They suffered a pain that no parent should have to endure — and one that I, as a father, cannot begin to conceive."

The Justice Department is examining evidence in the case and testimony from the state trial to determine whether criminal civil rights charges would be brought. However, legal experts say Justice officials would likely be saddled with some of the same challenges that complicated the unsuccessful state case. The key to charging Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch volunteer, lies in whether evidence exists that he was motivated by racial animosity to kill Martin, who was 17 when he was shot during a fight with Zimmerman in February 2012.

"There is a federal prosecution that theoretically is possible, but I'm sure federal prosecutors would think long and hard, given the state of the evidence, whether they would try to pursue that," said Scott Sundby, a former federal prosecutor who teaches criminal law at the University of Miami law school. "You'd have to prove that George Zimmerman was seeking out to commit the crime against Trayvon Martin, specifically because he was African-American."



LAURA A. ODA/BAY AREA NEWS GROUP/MCT
Sears on 20th Street and Telegraph boarded up all its broken windows in Oakland, Calif., Monday after a weekend of protests brought late night vandalism and outrage over the acquittal in George Zimmerman's murder trial.

Juror Tells CNN: Zimmerman Had Right To Defend Himself

MIAMI (AP) — A juror in the George Zimmerman trial said Monday that the actions of the neighborhood watch volunteer and Trayvon Martin both led to the teenager's fatal shooting last year, but that Zimmerman didn't actually break the law.

The woman known as Juror B37 told CNN's Anderson Cooper that Zimmerman made some poor decisions leading up to the shooting, but that Martin wasn't innocent either.

"I think both were responsible for the situation they had gotten themselves into," said the juror, who is planning to write a book about the trial. "I think they both could have walked away."

The juror said Sanford Police Detective Chris Serino made a big impression on her, because he would have been accustomed to dealing with murders and similar cases.

He would have known how to spot a liar, and yet he testified that he believed Zimmerman, the juror said.

Legal analysts agreed that Serino's testimony was a blow to the state's case.

The juror was not impressed by the testimony of Rachel Jeantel, who was talking with Martin by cellphone moments before he was fatally shot by Zimmerman in February, 2012.

"I didn't think it was very credible, but I felt very sorry for her," the juror said. "She didn't want to be there."

The interview came two days after the six-woman jury acquitted Zimmerman, a former neighborhood watch activist, of second-degree murder in the shooting death of Martin in a gated community in Sanford, Fla.

Senators Scrapping Over Nominees

BY DAVID ESPO

AP Special Correspondent

WASHINGTON — A show-down looming, Republicans and Democrats struggled with-out success Monday night in marathon, closed-door talks to resolve the fate of several of President Barack Obama's stalled appointees, a dispute that threatened what little bipartisan cooperation remains in the Senate.

Emerging from the session in the ornate Old Senate Chamber — where the public and media were barred — lawmakers from both parties reported progress toward a compromise and said the party leaders would continue talks into the night.

"We've had a very good conversation," said Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev. Yet he gave no indication whether he planned to seek a delay in a series of roll calls planned for morning on confirmation of seven presidential appointees whom Republicans have so far blocked from receiving yes-or-no votes.

Don Stewart, a spokesman for Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, said: "A clear bipartisan majority in the meeting believed the leaders ought to find a solution. And discussions will continue."

Reid insisted in advance that Republicans permit yes-or-no confirmation votes on all seven of the nominees at issue. If they won't, he declared in a morning speech before the Center for American Progress, Democrats will change the Senate's rules to strip them of their ability to delay.

The group of nominees includes Obama's picks to head the Labor Department, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Export-Import Bank. But most of the controversy has surrounded three appointments to the National Labor Relations Board and a head for the newly created Consumer Finance Protection Bureau. Three of the seven nominees were originally named in 2011.

While there were numerous

reports of progress toward a compromise in the closed-door meeting, Reid's pointed observation that votes were still planned for morning had the effect of keeping pressure on Republicans to give ground.

Nearly all 100 senators attended what amounted to an off-the-record session in the chamber where the Senate debated slavery and other momentous issues of the 19th century. In a reference to history, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., prompted laughter when he said that the last time a senator from his state spoke in the room, "the Union dissolved."

Senators in both parties said the session had been candid and even overdue in an institution where gridlock and acrimony have increasingly become the order of the day.


Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., who proposed the meeting last week, said afterward, "I think there's an opportunity to work things out."

Another Republican, Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, told reporters, "I think there's enough perception on both sides that the shoe could be on the other foot very quickly."

In attempting to persuade Democrats not to seek a rules change unilaterally, Republicans have noted that they will one day have a majority. Also part of the discussion is the realization that a future ma-

jority could decide to strip the minority party of the right to delay lifetime judicial nominations, or perhaps even legislation that can remain on the books for decades or longer.

In the current dispute, Reid is proposing a change to apply only to appointments to administration positions, which ends when a president's term does.




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