

Black Cops File Lawsuit

Baltimore officers claim hostile workplace

(AP) — Twenty-one black current and former Baltimore city police officers filed a discrimination lawsuit against the city, alleging that nooses were hung in their lockers, dog feces was placed on their desks and zebra stripes were painted on pictures of their mixed-race children.

The federal class-action lawsuit filed Monday accuses the department of condoning a hostile workplace, blocking black officers from promotion, levying uneven discipline and retaliating against officers who spoke out against discrimination.

It also alleges that racism led to the firing last month of former police Commissioner Kevin P. Clark.

Mayor Martin O'Malley said domestic abuse allegations against the commissioner, though unsubstantiated, had eroded his leadership ability.

The group of officers seeks financial damages, the appointment of an independent monitor and the reinstatement of fired officers, among other restitution.

Aging Rosa Parks to Live Rent Free

Civil rights pioneer had faced eviction

(AP) — Rosa Parks' landlord has offered to let her stay in her Detroit apartment rent-free, two years after threatening to evict her when the owners said her caretakers missed rental payments.

Parks' doctors say the 91-year-old civil rights pioneer has dementia and is in poor health. Hartford Memorial



Rosa Parks

Baptist Church in Detroit had been paying Parks' rent, which had been as high as \$1,800 a month, since August 2003, the Rev. Charles Adams said.

"We did not want her set out in the street," Adams said. "We didn't want to make a big noise out of it. ... It was a simple act of kindness."

In an October letter, Riverfront Associates, which owns the apartment where Parks has lived since 1994, said she could stay for free for the rest of her life.

"I thought it was the right thing to do," managing partner Peter Cummings told the Detroit Free Press

for Monday's editions. "This woman is an icon. She deserves an enormous amount of respect. In a way, I think it's an honor to be able to accord her that respect."

Parks was 42 when she refused to give up her seat on a city bus in Montgomery, Ala., in 1955. Her arrest triggered a 381-day boycott of the bus system organized by a then little-known Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Elaine Steele, who manages the nonprofit Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute, told the newspaper that Parks gets proper care and eviction notices were sent in error in 2002.

More Deadly Attacks in Iraq

(AP) — U.S. troops fought a gunbattle with insurgents along a busy street in Baghdad on Monday, sending passers-by scurrying for cover, witnesses said, while five U.S. troops were reported killed in separate clashes in a volatile western province as insurgents stepped up attacks ahead of next month's elections.

The violence came a day after gunmen ambushed a bus carrying unarmed Iraqis to work at a U.S. munitions dump near Tikrit, killing 17 and raising the death toll from three days of intensified insurgent attacks to at least 70 Iraqis.

The attacks, focused in Baghdad and several cities to the north, appeared to be aimed at scaring off those who cooperate with the American military - whether police, national guardsmen, or ordinary people just looking for a paycheck.



US troops inspect the site where they detonated an abandoned car packed with explosives in Baghdad, Iraq on Monday. (AP photo)

They also have targeted Kurdish militiamen and Shiite worshippers in a possible bid to foment sectarian and ethnic unrest.

The latest fighting in Baghdad broke out after armed rebels appeared on the busy Haifa Street, saying they were hunting for Iraqis collaborating with U.S.-led forces.

Witnesses said they shot and killed a man they claimed was working for the Americans.

The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force also said three soldiers attached to the Marines died in two incidents Sunday in the western province, which includes the battleground cities of Fallujah and Ramadi. Earlier, the military said two Marines had been killed in action in Anbar on Friday.

The brought to at least 1,276 the number of U.S. troops to have died since the war began in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count.

Bush Dumps Civil Rights Chairwoman

(AP) — President Bush on Monday moved to replace Mary Frances Berry, the outspoken chairwoman of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission who has argued with every president since Jimmy Carter appointed her to the panel a quarter century ago.

But Berry balked at leaving now, arguing through a spokesman that she and vice chairman Cruz Reynoso, who also is being replaced, have terms that run until midnight Jan. 21. The White House maintained that their six-year terms expired Sunday and that Berry and Reynoso had been replaced.

The eight-member panel investigates



Mary Frances Berry

civil rights complaints and publicizes its findings. It has no enforcement power. Four years ago, Berry and the commission were heavily critical of Florida Gov. Jeb Bush for his administration's handling of the disputed presidential election won by his brother.

The newly named commissioners are Gerald A. Reynolds, former assistant secretary for the office of civil rights in the Education Department, and attorney Ashley L. Taylor of Richmond, Va. Bush intends to designate Reynolds the commission chairman, succeeding Berry, and to name Abigail Thernstrom, already a commission member, as vice chairperson.

Militants Storm US Consulate

(AP) — Militants lobbing explosives forced their way into the heavily guarded U.S. consulate in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia on Monday before Saudi security forces stormed the compound and fought a gunbattle to end a four-hour standoff. Eight people, none American, were killed.

The bold assault, the worst in the kingdom since May, demonstrated that Saudi Arabia's crackdown on al-Qaida is still far from successful in the native land of

terrorist leader Osama bin Laden.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but Saudi officials blamed a "deviant" group - the government's way of identifying al-Qaida extremists it holds responsible for a string of terror strikes over the past two years.

President Bush said the attack showed "terrorists are still on the move," trying to intimidate Americans and force the United States to withdraw from Saudi Arabia and Iraq.



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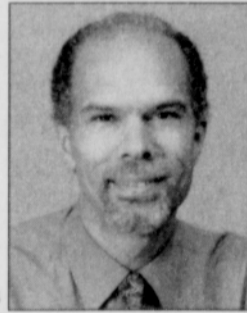
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New Iraqi Prisoner Photos Found

(AP) — The U.S. military has launched a criminal investigation into photographs that appear to show Navy SEALs in Iraq sitting on hooded and handcuffed detainees, and photos of what appear to be bloodied prisoners, one with a gun to his head.

Some of the photos have date stamps suggesting they were taken in May 2003, which could make them the earliest evidence of possible abuse of prisoners in Iraq. The far more brutal practices photographed in Abu Ghraib prison occurred months later.

An Associated Press reporter found more than 40 of the pictures among hundreds in an album posted on a commercial photo-sharing Web site by a woman who said her husband brought them from Iraq after his tour of duty. It is unclear who took the pictures, which the Navy said it was investigating after the AP furnished copies to get comment.

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