

Apology Made for Lynching Inaction

Senate finally acknowledges horror of past

(AP)—One woman remembered a cousin who had died at the hands of a mob in Kentucky. Another recalled a teenager dragged from a relative's home in Mississippi only to turn up dead in a river.

James Cameron lived to recount his own brush with mob justice. In 1930 he and two others were taken from an Indiana jail to face a lynch mob. The mob hanged the two young men accused of murder and rape but spared Cameron when someone in the crowd contended that the 16-year-old was not involved.

"I was saved by a miracle," said Cameron, now 91. People were "hollering for my blood," he recalled, "when a voice said, 'Take this boy back.'"

To the victims of lynching—4,743 people killed between 1882 and 1968, three out of four of them black—the Senate issued an apology Monday night for not standing against the violence.

"The apology, while late, is very necessary," Doria Dee Johnson, an expert on the subject of lynching and the great-great-granddaughter of a victim. "People suf-



Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., welcomes Alberta Merriwether to a luncheon on Capitol Hill Monday for family members of lynching victims. (AP Photo)

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—Doria Dee Johnson, great-great-granddaughter of a lynching victim

ferred. When the United States government could have done something about it, it did not."

Johnson traveled from Evanston, Ill., to witness, along with more than 100 other

relatives of Anthony P. Crawford, the voice-vote passage of the Senate resolution. Crawford was lynched in 1916 in Abbeville, S.C.

One of the resolution's chief sponsors,

Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., noted that the public nature of many of the lynchings was particularly disturbing.

"This was a community spectacle and the Senate of the United States knew it," Landrieu said. "There may be no other injustice in American history for which the Senate so uniquely bears responsibility."

Seven presidents petitioned Congress to end lynchings. Nearly 200 anti-lynching bills were introduced in the first half of the 20th century. The House passed three anti-lynching measures between 1920 and 1940, but the Senate passed none.

Senators filibustered anti-lynching measures for a total of six weeks, said the main Republican sponsor of the resolution, Sen. George Allen of Virginia. "It's not easy for people to apologize, but I think it does show the character of the Senate today," he said.

Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., the Senate's only black member, said, "I do hope that this chamber also spends some time ... doing something concrete and tangible to heal the long shadow of slavery and the legacy of discrimination so that 100 years from now we can look back and be proud and not have to apologize once again."



Edgar Ray Killen

'Mississippi Burning' Trial Begins

Justice sought 42 years after killings

(AP)—A historic civil rights trial is finally being revisited four decades later. Jury selection started Monday under heavy security for the trial of a reputed Ku Klux Klansman accused in the notorious killings of three civil rights workers.

The 1964 murders of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner shocked the nation and brought attention to the struggle to register black voters in the segregated South. Their killings were depicted in the 1988 movie "Mississippi Burning."

Members of the jury pool, expected to total about 400, were brought to the Neshoba County courthouse on buses and ushered in through a side door. The courtroom doors were closed at the beginning of the selection process.

Defendant Edgar Ray Killen, who has been free on bail, looked straight ahead and said nothing as he was taken into the two-story, red brick courthouse in a wheelchair.

Killen, an 80-year-old part-time preacher, is the only person ever indicted on state murder charges in the case.

He was tried in 1967 on federal charges of violating the victims' civil rights, but the case ended in a hung jury. Seven others were convicted, but none served more than six years.

Chaney, a black man from Mississippi, and Schwerner and Goodman, white men from New York, were together in a car near Philadelphia on June 21, 1964, when they were stopped by Klansmen, beaten and shot to death. Their bodies were found 44 days later, buried in an earthen dam.

U.S. Military Deaths Reach 1,700

(AP)—The deaths of loved ones and family members in Iraq keep adding up. As of Sunday, June 12, at least 1,701 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,293 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department. The figures include five military civilians.

The British military has reported 89 deaths; Italy, 25; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 17; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, 10; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Kazakhstan and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,563 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count

Court Finds Error in Murder Conviction

Blacks purposely excluded from Texas jury

(AP)—The Supreme Court has overturned the conviction of a black death row inmate who said Texas prosecutors unfairly stacked his jury with whites, issuing a harsh rebuke to the state that executes more people than any other.

The 6-3 ruling Monday ordered a new trial for Thomas Miller-EI, who challenged his conviction for the 1985 murder of a 25-year-old Dallas motel clerk.

In the opinion, Justice David H. Souter noted that in picking a jury for



Thomas Miller-EI

Miller-EI's trial, black jurors were questioned more aggressively about the death penalty, and the pool was "shuffled" at least twice by prosecutors, apparently to increase the chances whites would be selected.

"The prosecutors' chosen race-neutral reasons for the strikes do not hold up," Souter wrote.

In a dissent, Justice Clarence Thomas, the court's only African American member and a staunch conservative, argued that Texas prosecutors had of-

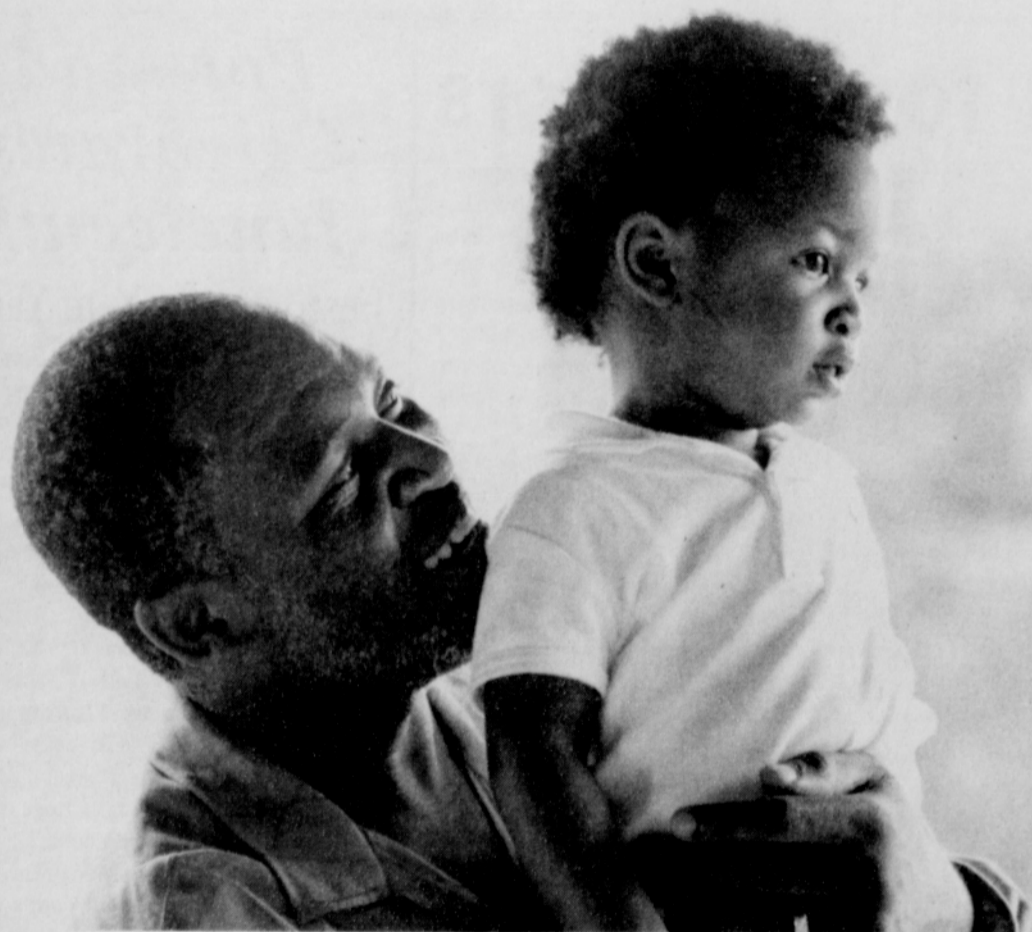
fered enough evidence that exclusions of black jurors were made for reasons other than race.

For instance, the state's explanation that jurors were struck based on their hostility to the death penalty is plausible, and the alleged racial motivation behind prosecutors' decision to shuffle the jury pool is only speculative, wrote Thomas.

"In view of the evidence actually presented to the Texas courts, their conclusion that the state did not discriminate was eminently reasonable," Thomas wrote in an opinion joined by Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Justice Antonin Scalia.

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We fired up that grill like always. But today, something was different. We all gathered close, quietly watching the flame. The sound of the blues echoed from somewhere in the park. I looked around and saw my brother, my wife, our kids and their families, all together. And that's when it hit me. Really hit me. Here we are, one hundred forty years later, with me holding one more ray of hope in my arms.

Juneteenth is a day to embrace the past and reflect on the future. Wells Fargo honors this national day of African-American freedom.

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