

Preacher Guilty in 'Mississippi Burning' Case

Blamed for 1964 murders of 3 civil rights workers

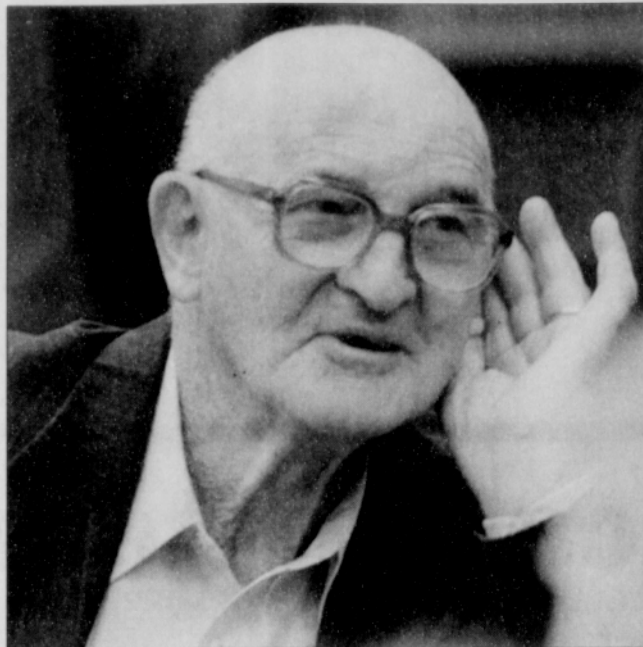
(AP) — Forty-one years to the day after three civil rights workers were beaten and shot to death, an 80-year-old preacher and former Ku Klux Klansman was found guilty of manslaughter Tuesday in a trial that marked Mississippi's latest attempt to atone for its bloodstained, racist past.

The jury of nine whites and three blacks took nearly six hours to clear Edgar Ray Killen of murder but convict him of the lesser charges in the 1964 killings that galvanized the struggle for equality and helped bring about passage of the 1964 Civil Rights

Act. Killen, a bald figure with owlsh bifocals, sat impassively in his wheelchair, an oxygen tube up his nose, as he listened to the verdict.

"Forty-one years after the tragic murders ... justice finally arrives in Philadelphia, Miss.," said Rep. Bennie Thompson, Mississippi's only black congressman. "Yet, the state of Mississippi must see to it that the wrongs of yesterday do not become the albatrosses of today."

The murder charge carried up to life in prison. But Killen could still spend the rest of his life behind bars; each of



Edgar Ray Killen

the three manslaughter charges is punishable by up to 20 years. Judge Marcus Gordon scheduled sentencing for Thursday.

Civil rights volunteers Andrew Goodman and Michael - two white New Yorkers - and James Chaney, a black Mississippian, were intercepted by Klansmen in their station wagon on June 21, 1964. Their bodies were found 44 days later buried in an earthen dam, in a case that was dramatized in the 1988 movie "Mississippi Burning."

Prosecutors said Killen - a part-time preacher and sawmill operator - organized the carloads of Klansmen who hunted down and killed the three young men.

On Tuesday, cheers could be heard outside the two-story, red brick court-

house in this small town after Killen was convicted. Passers-by patted Chaney's brother, Ben, on the back, and a woman slowed her vehicle and yelled, "Hey, Mr. Chaney, all right!" Ben Chaney thanked prosecutors and "the white people who walked up to me and said things are changing. I think there's hope."

Schwerner's widow, Rita Schwerner Bender, hugged District Attorney Mark Duncan and called it "a day of great importance to all of us." But she said others also should be held responsible for the slayings.

"Preacher Killen didn't act in a vacuum," she said. "The state of Mississippi was complicit in these crimes and all the crimes that occurred, and that has to be opened up."

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Democrats Urge Inquiry on Bush, Iraq



Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich. (center), Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, (left) and Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif. deliver petitions to the White House Thursday demanding an official inquiry to determine if President Bush intentionally misled Congress in his march toward war in Iraq. (AP photo)

Conyers and a half-dozen other members of Congress were stopped at the White House gate later Thursday when they hand-delivered petitions signed by 560,000 Americans who want Bush to provide a detailed response to the Downing Street memo. When Conyers couldn't get in, an anti-war demonstrator shouted, "Send Bush out!"

"Quite frankly, evidence that appears to be building up points to whether or not the president has deliberately misled Congress to make the most important decision a president has to make, going to war," Rep. Charles Rangel of New York, senior Democrat on the House Ways and Means Committee, said earlier at the event on Capitol Hill.

Memo exposes tainted motives

(AP) - Amid new questions about President Bush's drive to topple Saddam Hussein, several House Democrats urged Congress Thursday to conduct an official inquiry to determine whether the president intentionally misled Congress.

At a public forum where the word "impeachment" loomed large, Exhibit A was the so-called Downing Street memo, a prewar document leaked from inside the British government. Rep. John Conyers of Michigan, the ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee,

organized the event.

Recounting a meeting of Prime Minister Tony Blair's national security team, the memo says the Bush administration believed that war was inevitable and was determined to use intelligence about weapons of mass destruction to justify the ouster of Saddam.

"The intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy," one of the participants was quoted as saying at the meeting, which took place just after British officials returned from Washington.

Misleading Congress is an impeachable offense, a point that Rangel underscored by saying he's already been through two impeachments. He referred to the impeachment of President Clinton for an affair with a White House intern and of President Nixon for Watergate, even though Nixon resigned to avoid impeachment.

Conyers pointed to statements by Bush in the run-up to invasion that war would be a last resort. "The veracity of those statements has - to put it mildly - come into question," he said.

Bias Found in Media Coverage

Victims who are male, black get ignored

(AP) - Most of the missing adults tracked by the FBI are men. More than one-in-five of those abducted or kidnapped are black.

But you might not get that impression from the news media, and some journalism watchdogs are now taking the industry to task for what they see as a disproportionate emphasis on cases in which white girls and women - overwhelmingly upper-middle class and attractive - disappear.

Television executives, who receive much of the criticism, defend their coverage. They stress that cases such as the recent disappearance in Aruba of 18-year-old Natalee Holloway of Alabama are extraordinary, and would be newsworthy no matter her background.

But some insist that media attention on so few people overshadows the more than 100,000 active files on missing adults and children currently tracked by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"To be blunt, blond white chicks who go missing get covered and poor, black, Hispanic or other people of color who go missing do not get covered," said Tom Rosenstiel, di-

rector of the Washington-based Project for Excellence in Journalism.

On its website, the National Center for Missing Adults profiles more than 1,000 individuals, including photos, physical descriptions and short narratives of when they were last seen. They are young and old, working-class and professional, of all ethnic backgrounds. Most are average-looking.

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-Tom Rosenstiel, director of Excellence in Journalism

And most never receive a mention in their local newspapers or television broadcasts, said Erin Bruno, a case manager at the center who tries to interest media outlets in publicizing missing adults.

Many consider women more sympathetic potential victims than men - and white women even more so, said Kristal Brent Zook, a professor at Columbia University's journalism school who wrote an

article published in this month's Essence magazine about missing black women who are largely ignored.

"Who's appealing? Who's sexy?" she asked. "The virginal, pure, blond princess is missing. ... It has a lot to do with class and sexuality and ageism, not just race."

Maynard said many news directors, editors and everyday people stereotype men and minorities who turn up missing and assume "it's drugs or criminal activity or some sort of pathology." If journalists - consciously or unconsciously - expect men and minorities to be crime victims, she said, few will consider it newsworthy if that actually happens.

Dan Shelley, chairman of the Radio-Television News Directors Association, said that unconscious bias is possible.

But "to the extent that we as an industry have created a perception in some that we're ignoring missing person cases involving men or people of certain ethnicities, it's unfortunate," he said. "The more diverse our work forces are and newsrooms are, the greater the chances our stories will truly reflect our communities."

Smith Late on Lynching Apology

continued from Front

Senator, Democrat Ron Wyden, became a co-sponsor either the day or the evening of the voting, after it had become clear the resolution enjoyed widespread support.

By Friday, four days after passage, the missing signatures dwindled to eight Republicans.

Absent were Lamar Alexander of Tennessee; Thad Cochran and Trent Lott of Mississippi; John Cornyn of Texas; Mike Enzi and Craig Thomas of Wyoming; and Judd Gregg and John Sununu of New Hampshire.

African American leaders have criticized senators who didn't sign the resolution.

"They are worried about votes, or they lack values if they don't recognize the significance of issuing an apology," said Dan Duster, the great grandson of Ida B. Wells.

Wells, an African-American journalist, was the first person to suggest anti-lynching legislation in the late 1800s. She fought for a law against lynching until her death in 1931.

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