

BLACK HISTORY MONTH and the American Experience

# Last Call for Victims in Hotels

## Hurricane homeless must find other lodging

(AP) — About 12,000 families made homeless by last year's hurricanes began checking out of their federally funded hotel rooms around the country Monday after a federal judge let FEMA stop paying directly for their stays.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency promised the evacuees from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita that they will still receive federal rent assistance that they can put toward hotel stays or other housing. But the agency will no longer pay for their hotel rooms directly.

Earlier in the day, attorneys for the evacuees pleaded with U.S. District Judge Stanwood Duval for a last-minute reprieve, saying the rent assistance will not be enough for decent living

accommodations or continued hotel stays.

"These people are going to be homeless. We've heard from a lot of people who are going to be sleeping in their cars," said Bill Quigley, a lawyer for the evacuees.

But Duval denied the request.

FEMA said the majority of those checking out had made arrangements for other housing. But some said they had nowhere to go except their own cars, a relative's couch or back to a shelter.

Monday marks the second wave of evacuees losing FEMA financing of their hotel rooms. Last week, the occupants of roughly 4,500 rooms lost FEMA funding after failing to ask the agency for extensions.



Bert Sutton moves his belongings out of the Astor Crowne Plaza on Canal Street in New Orleans on Monday after FEMA stopped paying for hotels for homeless hurricane victims. Sutton said he was going to try to stay with his brother in a trailer or a neighbor's couch. (AP photo)

## Hunting Accident Setback

### Man shot by Cheney has heart attack

(AP) — A 78-year-old lawyer who was shot by Vice President Dick Cheney in a Texas hunting accident has some birdshot lodged in his heart and he had a "minor heart attack," a hospital official said Tuesday.

Peter Banko, the hospital administrator at Christus Spohn Hospital Corpus Christi-Memorial, said Harry Whittington had the heart attack early Tuesday while being evaluated.

He said there was an irregularity in the heartbeat caused by a birdshot pellet, and doctors performed a cardiac catheterization.

Whittington, a prominent Republican attorney from Austin, Texas, was accidentally sprayed with shotgun pellets when Cheney was aiming for a quail

Saturday.

Whittington had initially been placed in intensive care. He had been moved to a "step-down unit" Monday after doctors decided to leave several birdshot pellets lodged in his skin rather than try to remove them.

A Texas Parks and Wildlife Department report said Whittington was retrieving a

downed bird and stepped out of the hunting line he was sharing with Cheney. "Another covey was flushed and Cheney swung on a bird and fired, striking Whittington in the face, neck and chest at approximately 30 yards," the report said.

The wildlife department issued a report Monday that found the main factor contributing to the accident was a "hunter's judgment factor." No other secondary factors were found to have played a role.



Vice President Dick Cheney

## Spike Lee: Mississippi Should Get Rid of Flag

(AP) — Director Spike Lee, known for his stylish and controversial films, said Mississippi should get rid of the confederate battle cross in its state flag during a speech at the University of Mississippi's Black History Month celebration.

Lee said Mississippians cling too tightly to what he considers symbols of oppression.

"You've gotta do something about that flag," he said. "I know people say its representative of history. Well, so's the swastika."

Lee is working on a documentary entitled "When the Levees Broke," which deals with the African-American experience in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.



Director Spike Lee is the featured speaker during the University of Mississippi's Black History Month celebration. (AP photo)

"When I saw the devastation on TV and in the news...it (didn't) prepare me for what I saw there," Lee said of New Orleans. "You hear these people's stories, and it's heart-breaking."

"Levees" will be premiere on HBO on Aug. 29, exactly one year after Hurricane Katrina made landfall.

Lee also targeted certain aspects of modern black culture during his speech.

Lee said that rap culture has perpetuated a cult of violence, drug use, disrespect to women and ignorance among a staggering portion of young blacks.

"This 'gangsta' obsession is madness," Lee said. "Thinking like that is genocide."

## UN Probe Finds Torture at Guantanamo

(AP) — A United Nations investigation has concluded that the United States committed

acts amounting to torture at Guantanamo Bay, including force-feeding detainees and subjecting them to prolonged solitary confinement.

U.S. officials rejected the report, saying it was riddled with errors and treated statements from detainees' lawyers as fact.

The report from five U.N. human rights experts also recommended the United States close Guantanamo Bay and revoke all special interrogation techniques authorized by the Department of Defense.

It accused the United States of violating the detainees' rights to a fair trial, to freedom of

religion and to health.

The draft report, which follows repeated claims by prisoners at Guantanamo Bay that they have been mistreated or denied their rights, was delivered to the United States on Jan. 16. It was first disclosed Sunday by the Los Angeles Times.

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## Riots, Deaths Hit LA Jails

### Racially motivated brawls blamed

(AP) — Hundreds of Los Angeles County jail inmates were being transferred to the state corrections system after a series of racially motivated brawls killed two inmates and rocked the county jail system for more than a week, authorities said Monday.

"We are in the process of getting all the prisoners we can out of here and into the state prison system," Los Angeles County sheriff's Chief Marc Klugman.

About 200 inmates already have been moved out and another 400

were expected to be transferred this week, said Klugman.

"We are trying to stop all this fighting," sheriff's Deputy Alba Yates said.

The county jail system, which held 18,425 inmates as of Monday morning, remained on lockdown, meaning restricted movement within the jails and a loss of privileges such as visiting rights, Yates said.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California said punitive measures may not stop the riots, adding that community leaders, gang intervention specialists and racial integration experts must be involved.

Some black community activists called for the FBI to investi-

gate the incidents as hate crimes.

The latest inmate death occurred Sunday afternoon after a fight between four Hispanic and two black prisoners in a six-man cell at the downtown Men's Central Jail.

A 38-year-old black inmate collapsed and died after the fight. Another black inmate was killed Feb. 4 in racial fighting at the Pitchess Detention Center's North Facility in Castaic, north of Los Angeles.

On Sunday, two fights between black and Hispanic inmates broke out at the Pitchess facility. Five inmates sustained minor injuries before the fights were broken up with tear gas and pellet weapons.

## Swann Wins GOP Endorsement

(AP) — Pennsylvania's Republican Party leaders endorsed former Pittsburgh Steelers star Lynn Swann for governor Saturday, virtually guaranteeing that he will be the candidate to face Democratic incumbent Ed Rendell this fall.

"I haven't cried this much since I was inducted into the Hall of Fame," Swann told the applauding crowd as he wiped tears from his eyes.

Swann, 53, is seeking to become Pennsylvania's first black governor. Though he has revealed little about his political philosophy, he has said the Democratic Party has "taken



Lynn Swann

the African-American vote for granted."

He didn't shed any new light on his platform Saturday.

A novice in politics, Swann remains a sports celebrity and his name is as inextricably linked to Pittsburgh — the state's second-largest city — as Rendell is tied to Philadelphia, where he once was mayor.

Swann was a wide receiver for the Steelers from 1974-83 and led his team to four Super Bowl victories. After retiring from football, he worked as an ABC Sports commentator. He was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2001.