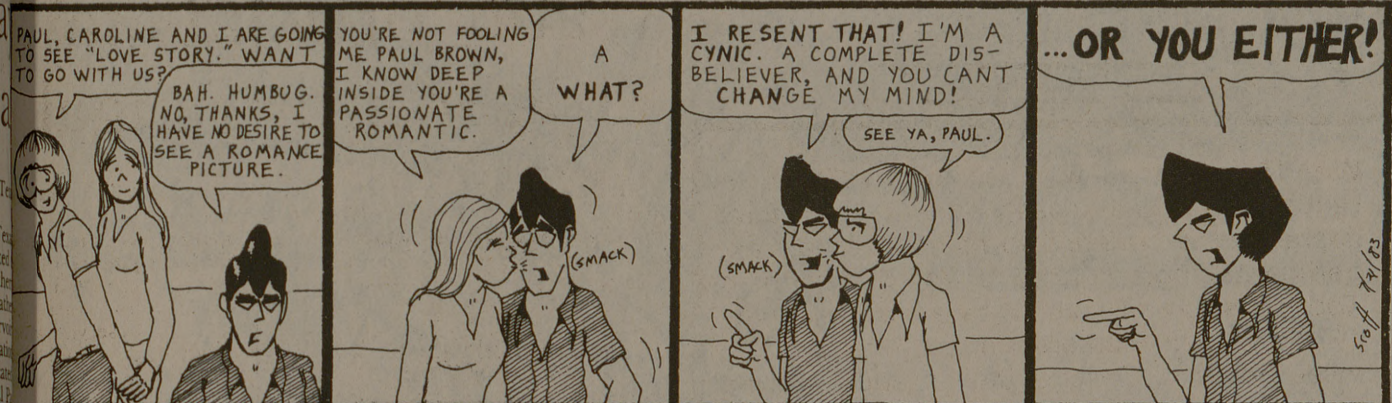


Warped

by Scott McCullar

Imposter basketball star may be ex-NFL Star



Victims of dioxin testify

WASHINGTON — Residents of dioxin-contaminated Times Beach, Mo., have not been fairly compensated for physical, mental and financial problems stemming from their "agonizing death," Mayor Leistner said Wednesday. The state and federal government helped with a \$36.5 million buyout of Times Beach, but there's no way that amount of money can reimburse the people for loss of their health," Leistner told a House Public Works and Transportation subcommittee hearing. "Trying to summarize the agonizing death of our city is difficult," she said, reading from a 6-page statement. "This experience has been an emotional roller coaster ride for 2,000 workers and what people."

lack of "people-oriented" compensation for the environmental disaster that drove people from her city. She outlined the seizures, emotional problems, allergies, skin diseases, and tumors that have affected Times Beach residents, including some members of her own family. One of her daughters has been diagnosed as having a precancerous cervix, and other young women — some in their teens — have developed breast cancer, Leistner said. "While the human temptation exists to blame anything and everything on dioxin, I have realized only problems that have defied diagnosis as to their cause," she said. Dioxin, a by-product of the manufacture of herbicides, is a potent cause of cancer in animals and causes skin rashes in humans. Researchers are studying a possible link between dioxin and a rare soft-tissue cancer in humans. Dioxin was contained in waste oil spread in several areas of

Missouri, including Times Beach, as a dust control measure in the early 1970s. The EPA announced last February it was tapping the government's \$1.6 billion Superfund, a special tax on chemical companies producing hazardous wastes, to buy out the estimated 800 residences and 12 businesses in Times Beach. Leistner said that compensation to some merchants for their business losses has been inadequate. "Businesses were told that (Small Business Administration) loans were available," she said. "Almost all applied, and almost all were refused. There was no 'ready' money for the business people, and they have suffered accordingly." She offered a series of recommendations for handling similar problems in the future, including establishment of a tax on chemicals to provide the necessary health care for people suffering from exposure to dioxin. She also called for adequate and prompt compensation for

business people and for personal property, along with lifetime follow-ups on the health of people exposed to the chemicals. Shirley and Ronald Payne of Pacific, Mo., who for 6½ years lived in Imperial, Mo., across the street from a dioxin-contaminated site, detailed the medical problems that they, their four children and former neighbors have suffered. "I believe our family health problems have been a direct result of our exposure to dioxin," she said, adding that state health officials agree. Although the Paynes sold their home in 1981 before the Environmental Protection Agency this year began contemplating buying out homes in the area, Payne said her family has sustained \$25,000 in medical expenses not covered by health insurance. "I am concerned about the other people who still live near and around the Minker site," she said. "The contaminated dirt is still there; there are no fences and nor warning signs.

United Press International NATCHITOCHE, La. — Detectives have tentatively identified a man accused of posing as basketball legend Bill Russell in a bizarre investment scam as former NFL star Marv Fleming. The new twist in the case was announced Tuesday by city police, who said efforts were continuing to identify the suspect through officials of the football league. "He did advise me that he was Marv Fleming the football player," said police detective Larry Vaughn. "But we still have no solid proof." Vaughn said the man admitted under questioning he was indeed Fleming and had once played for the Green Bay Packers and the Miami Dolphins. He said the man looked like a photo of the former NFL player and was wearing some jewelry shown in the picture. "The time we showed him this picture was the time he told us he really was Marv Fleming," Vaughn said. Fleming was the starting tight end for the Miami Super Bowl

teams of 1971, 1972 and 1973 after coming to the Dolphins in a trade with the Packers. Sheriff's deputies said the 6-foot-4 suspect went so far with his Bill Russell charade as to tell his would-be victim a voluntary operation had cut him down from his once-imposing height. "She thought the basketball player was much taller," said spokesman Russell Roge. "He told her he had an operation in which they removed 10 inches of bone out of his legs so he could fit in his Mercedes Benz." Detectives said the man explained his lack of resemblance to the former NBA player and coach by saying he had had an accident recently and was forced to undergo plastic surgery. The suspect identified himself as Russell but was carrying a driver's license and personal checks imprinted with the name of Fleming. He used these false identities in an attempt to trick the woman out of \$2,500, Roge said. According to the charges filed against him, the suspect phoned the woman as Russell and

sought her investment in a restaurant. He told her to make the check out to Fleming, whom he identified as his accountant. However, the woman became suspicious when her son, who played basketball, expressed doubts Russell would be involved in such a business deal. She invited the man to come over and discuss the offer in detail — as officers listened in another room. "She handed him the check, he got up and started out the front door," Vaughn said. "That's where we apprehended him." The suspect was charged with attempted felony theft. In the vehicle's trunk, officers said they found "a bunch of newspaper clippings about Marv Fleming Day," held in Texas when the player retired about nine years ago. A female companion identified as Bobbie Jane Bryant, 42, of Pueblo, Colo., was booked as an accomplice in the case. The woman "verified" the suspect was Bill Russell at the woman's house.

Hearing could lead to new trial for convicted murderer

United Press International AUSTIN — The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals Wednesday ordered a mental competency hearing that could lead to a new trial for death row inmate Samuel C. Hawkins, who was twice sentenced to die for the rapes and slayings of a pregnant Borger woman and an Amarillo girl, 12.

The state's highest criminal appeal court ruled a trial judge erred in refusing to let a jury decide whether Hawkins was competent to stand trial for the 1977 rape and stabbing death of Abbe Hamilton, 19, who was six months pregnant. The court said a Lubbock County jury should consider

within the next 90 days whether Hawkins was competent at the time of his trial for Hamilton's death. Hawkins, 39, was scheduled to be die in March 1982 for the kidnapping, rape and bludgeoning death of Rhonda Keyes, 12, of Amarillo, but an Austin judge stayed the execution. The Court of Criminal Appeals said that if a jury was unable to make the retrospective determination a new trial would be ordered.

Profile run on horse tortures

United Press International DALLAS — Police sought a psychological profile on the killer of seven horses, brutally tortured by internal injury, and because they are sadists with below-average intelligence and possibly bedwetters or arsonists.

Since all the horses were mares, police Sgt. W.B. Wilson said Monday, "I'm even wondering if there's some kind of hatred of women." Investigators believe the people are responsible for at least three incidents, since March, in

which seven mares died of internal injuries after being sexually mutilated. Police believe at least two people are involved — one to calm the animal or inject a drug and another to inflict the fatal injuries. "Cruelty to animals, a firestarter and bedwetters are part of one syndrome," said S.A. Somodevilla, Dallas police psychologist. In addition, he said, the people probably have

"a relatively low IQ" and are knowledgeable about horses. Investigators and psychologists discount rumors of cult involvement. No external mutilation occurred and no evidence of ritual activity was found at the scenes. "It's for kicks," Somodevilla said. "They're sick. The intent is to kill the animal. It's someone who is getting a kick out of the cruelty. There's sadism involved."

ACLU says more prisons won't help

United Press International SAVANNAH, Ga. — Building more prisons is not the answer to the overcrowding problem, an American Civil Liberties Union attorney told participants at the Southern legislative conference Tuesday. Steve Ney, chief staff counsel at the ACLU's National Prison Project, pointed out that overcrowding is a result of a doubled prison population over the past years. He said nearly half of the 30,000 people in state prisons around the country — about 10,000 — are in the 15 states at compose the Southern legislative Conference. "More building is not the answer," he said. "Clearly, the prisons are not rehabilitating anyone. They are not deterring crime."

time" sentence reductions allowed and reclassification of prisoners as ways to cut back prison populations. "We're trying to obtain humane conditions," he said. "The people in prison should be punished but under humane conditions." Paul Lawrence, a Justice Department lawyer, agreed with Ney. "Overcrowding means you have too many to take care of," Lawrence said. "The prison just isn't staffed or managed to meet constitutional standards. "We don't ask that rapists and murderers get out of prison. That's where they belong," Lawrence said. "But if you put him in there, you've got to protect him from a knife in the back, in the shower, from cutting his foot on the threshing machine." Eleven of the Southern states represented at the conference are under court order to alleviate prison overcrowding.

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