

# Court OKs jury in LAPD assault trial

SIMI VALLEY, Calif. (AP) — A jury with no blacks was seated Monday in the assault trial of four white Los Angeles police officers accused of beating a black motorist a year ago this week.

Most of those selected said they had seen the widely broadcast videotape of a crowd of officers beating Rodney King, but all promised to put aside preconceptions and look at the case anew.

"We believe they are going to be fair and impartial," said the prosecutor, Deputy District Attorney Terry White, who is black. "Fair and impartial knows no ethnic background or race group."

"I'm not surprised by the makeup of our jury," said defense attorney Michael Stone, who denied there was any defense plan to exclude blacks from the jury.

Jurors include one Asian and

one Hispanic. The seven men and five women are middle-aged and include a computer programmer, a housekeeper, an intensive care nurse and a park ranger. One man has a brother who is a retired police sergeant.

Later in the day, five women and one man were selected as alternates to step in if any juror has to leave the case. The defense excused one black prospective alternate.

Superior Court Judge Stanley Weisberg questioned prospective panelists for about two weeks. Opening statements originally set for Wednesday were delayed until Thursday to allow a hearing on prosecution requests to see the officers' personnel records. No court session was scheduled Tuesday, the first anniversary of the beating.

On March 3, 1991, King was clubbed, kicked, beaten and struck with a stun gun by a crowd of officers who converged on the scene after chasing his car for several miles.

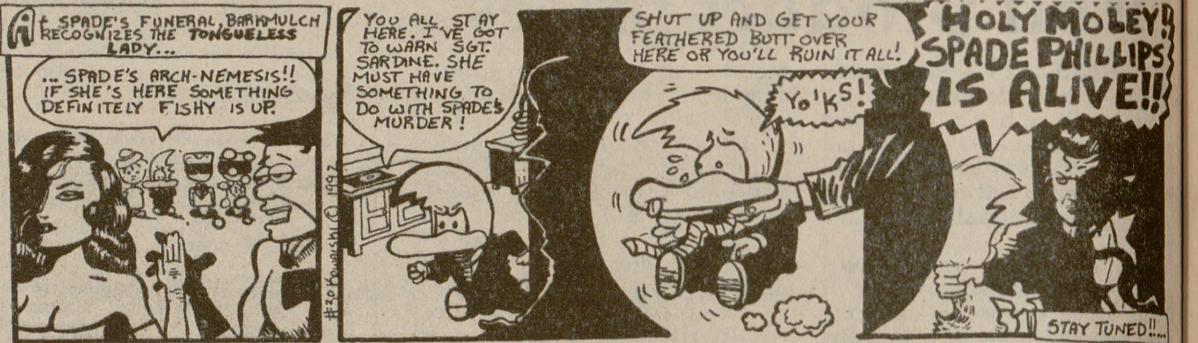
An amateur cameraman who lived nearby taped the confrontation and sold the tape to a television station. Nationwide broadcasts caused a sensation, and led to a nationwide review of police brutality and the planned resignation of Police Chief Daryl Gates.

Sgt. Stacey Koon, 41, and officers Timothy Wind, 31, Theodore Briseno, 39, and Laurence Powell, 29, are charged with assault. Koon and Powell also are charged with filing false reports on the beating.

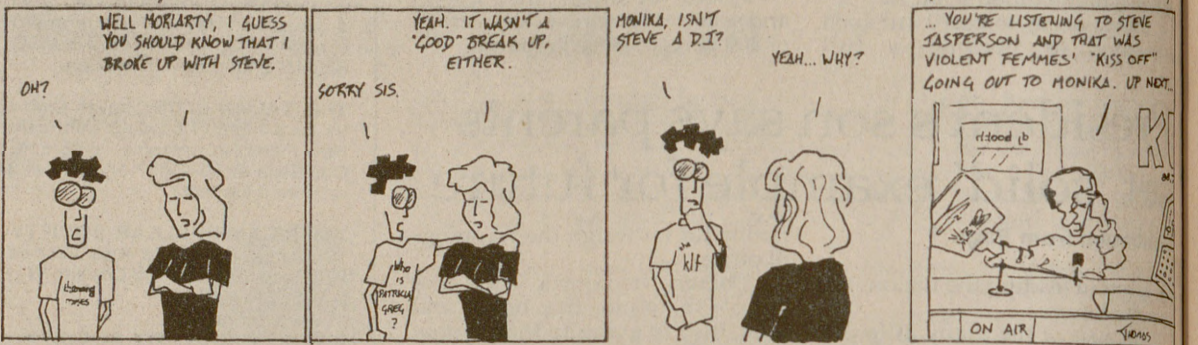
If convicted they could receive prison sentences ranging from four to eight years.

# Spade Phillips, P.I.

by Matt Kowalski



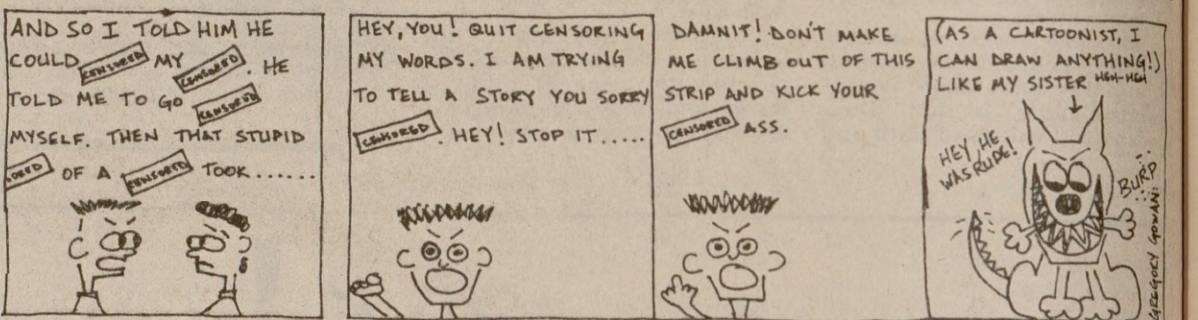
(the story so far...)



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# Tax funds offices

Oil spill response centers ensure cleanup

AUSTIN (AP) — The state established three oil spill response offices along the Gulf Coast, thanks to a new tax on oil shipped through Texas ports that has yielded more than \$7 million.

The offices in League City, Nederland and Corpus Christi have helped ensure the cleanup of 750 spills, most of them minor, officials say.

The teams there also are ready to coordinate a response to major spills, like the ones that occurred off the Texas coast in mid-1990.

Those spills prompted the Legislature last March to approve a tax of 2 cents per barrel on oil shipped through the state's ports. The oil spill response fund is operated by the General Land Office.

The state has allocated \$4 million on equipment to investigate spills, \$1.25 million annually to operate the response offices and \$1.25 million for research and development on oil spill cleanups through the state's university systems, said Tim McKinna, assistant land commissioner.

The rest of the money from the tax "goes into a mini-Superfund for coastal protection," McKinna said.

The fund would be used to clean up spills if the responsible party could not be identified.

The offices are not equipped to do the actual cleanup, but they take reports about oil spills and help mobilize a response, McKinna said.

(AP) — The state has set up three oil spill response offices

# High Court disallows

24-hour ban on obscenity

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government's bid to banish "indecent" from the airwaves 24 hours a day was derailed in the Supreme Court on Monday. The justices left intact a ruling that such a round-the-clock ban violates freedom of expression.

The Bush administration and advocacy groups had asked the court to revive the ban to protect children as well as the privacy of all listeners and viewers.

Indecent material is legally defined as describing "sexual or excretory activities or organs" in terms "patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium."

Legally obscene material has no constitutional protection, but material that is merely indecent does.

Only Justices Byron R. White and Sandra Day O'Connor voted to hear arguments in the case, but four votes are needed to grant such review.

Justice Clarence Thomas did not participate in considering the appeals. He was a member of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia when it said prohibiting indecent material 24 hours a day goes too far.

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