

L.A. reports lower death rates while city awaits King verdict

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — A police show of force, the mustering of troops and pleas for peace during deliberations in the Rodney King beating case apparently have made the streets safer. Authorities on Wednesday reported a dip in the murder rate.

"I don't know if we can say death took a holiday, but it looks that way," said Scott Carrier, a spokesman for the county coroner's office, which handles an average of five murders daily.

Stung by criticism it was slow to react to unrest after innocent verdicts in the state trial a year ago, law enforcement officials have put hundreds of additional officers on the street. National Guard troops were training at armories as the jury deliberated charges that four officers violated King's federal civil rights when they beat him March 3, 1991.

A police presence has been noticeable on the streets since deliberations began Saturday afternoon.

There were some murders reported over the weekend, however the Sheriff's

Department, which handles unincorporated parts of Los Angeles county, said no new murders were reported since early Monday.

"The high police presence can contribute to this," Deputy George Ducoulombier said.

The Los Angeles police said it didn't yet have statistics, but the coroner's office, which handles the entire country, reported no homicides in the 24-hour period ending Wednesday morning.

Capt. Patrick Froehle of South Central's crime-ridden 77th Street Division, just a mile from the flashpoint of last year's riots at Florence and Normandie avenues, said officers were pleased with the drop in slayings.

"It may have something to do with more police on the streets. Then again, it may have to do with other things," Froehle said.

Curtis Owens, executive director of the African American Community Unity Center, said community peace efforts also were helping.

"The real credit goes to the people of the community working to develop a presence of peace," Owens said. "Gang members and ex-gang members are cooperating

to help keep crime down right now."

While Carrier, of the coroner's office, said the police show of force was "absolutely" responsible for the dip in crime, others criticized it as excessive.

A letter released by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People urged police to work with the community to maintain calm when the verdicts are announced. It protested the law enforcement buildup.

The "a militaristic presence bristling with potential confrontation ... could all too easily spark the reactions everyone is trying to avoid," said the letter to Mayor Tom Bradley, Police Chief Willie Williams and Sheriff Sherman Block.

Joe Hicks of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference agreed that law enforcement had gone too far.

"They should be prepared for a crisis, but at some point this becomes counterproductive," he said.

Rioting that began last April 29 after the state trial left 54 people dead and caused \$1 billion in damages.

No verdict yet from Railey trial, as jurors dispute over testimony

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN ANTONIO — Jurors appeared to be growing testy Thursday after daylong deliberations failed to produce a verdict in the attempted murder trial of ex-minister Walker Railey.

Panel members sent out a series of notes saying they were "in dispute" over key portions of testimony.

A late note contained the word "fighting," but it was scratched out.

Most of the notes posed questions over times and testimony concerning Railey's activities and whereabouts the night his wife was attacked in April 1987.

They also included queries about phone calls and a visit Railey made that evening to the home of his lover, psychologist Lucy Papillon.

Railey, 45, former pastor of the First United Methodist Church in Dallas, is accused of trying to strangle his wife Peggy, who survived but suffered irreversible brain damage.

If convicted, he could receive up to 20 years in prison.

Railey said he returned home from Southern Methodist University that night to find his wife lying on the garage floor in convulsions and gasping for air.

He did not reveal his 45-minute rendezvous with Papillon.

In its notes, the jury said there was a conflict over the timing of that visit to Papillon's home as well as the times Papillon said Railey called her that night.

State District Judge Pat McDowell summoned jurors from their private chamber and read them portions of Papillon's testimony.

The judge also gave them the time of Railey's 911 call: 12:43 a.m.

However, McDowell said he could not comply with a request for the times that five witnesses said they saw Railey at different libraries on the SMU campus.

"The law does not permit a general reading back of testimony," he said.

At day's end, the jury sent out a note asking for clarification of a phrase in the judge's formal charge. Again, by law, he could not respond.

Outside the courtroom, defense lawyer Roy Barrera Sr. said he did not question the jury's "sincerity" in wanting so much information but added:

"This situation could get out of hand. We cannot go back over the trial record and retry the whole case."

State attorneys said jurors' questions were a positive sign.

"If they didn't want to see anything and didn't have conflicts on their deliberations, then I would worry a little bit about it," said chief prosecutor Cecil Emerson.

After nearly four weeks in court, and two stormy days of final arguments, the five men and seven women of the jury began deliberations at midday Wednesday.

When they recessed Thursday evening, they had deliberated a total of 10 hours over two days.

After Railey's testimony this week, his guilt or innocence seemed to revolve around one overriding issue:

Did he concoct his phony alibi six years ago to conceal attempted murder, as the state contends, or to hide his liaison with Papillon, as the defendant maintains?

In final summations Wednesday, prosecutor Emerson described the flashy psychologist as Railey's "lurid, lustful sexual fantasy" and said he was obsessed with her.

Forum

Continued from Page 1

Carolyn Adair, director of student activities at Texas A&M, said steps were taken to recognize gay and lesbian students on campus during the recent plans for the new student handbook.

"The Gay and Lesbian Student Services (GLSS) was not included in previous student handbooks," she said. "When we met to discuss the new handbook, we recognized the need to include the GLSS."

Diversity of religion was also a major concern raised by students during the forum.

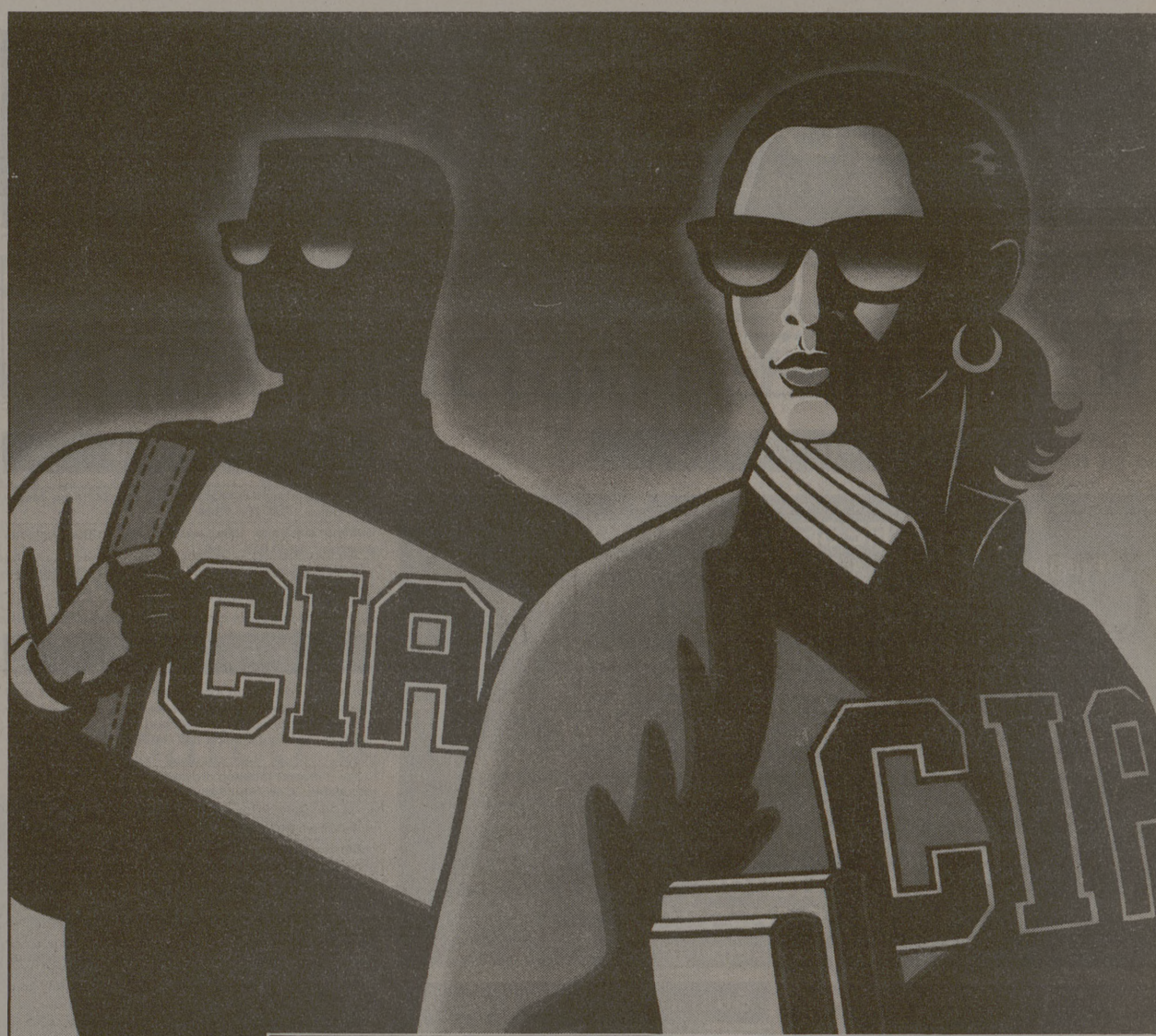
A Jewish student expressed his discomfort about the Christian invocations delivered at campus events. "Texas A&M students should be aware that there are spiritual denominations on campus besides Christians," he said.

The University is trying to make students more conscious about the number of non-Christian students at Texas A&M, Adair said.

"We're trying to make sure that everyone understands the fact that there are more than just Christians on campus," she said. "Our policy is to do an invocation at football games and graduation, but we tell the presenters to do a nondenominational invocation."

Texas A&M has a long journey ahead to end discrimination on campus, Powell said.

"We have to do everything we can as administrators, students and educators to improve perception," she said. "It's a matter of attitudes changing slowly."



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