

Programming Resources Guide

The Programming Resources Guide can help your organization find speakers and presenters for your next meeting. There is a wide variety of programs to choose from and most speakers are quite flexible. Add some spice to the your next meeting.

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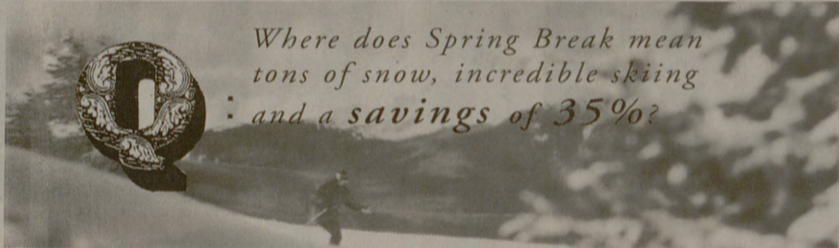
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Pathologist testifies Byrd alive while being dragged

Prosecutors wrap up case against accused white supremacist

JASPER (AP) — James Byrd Jr., chained at the ankles and desperately trying to ease the excruciating pain as he was dragged behind a pickup truck along a bumpy road, was alive until his head slammed into a culvert, decapitating him, a pathologist testified Monday at the trial of one of the men accused in his slaying.

Prosecutors, who wrapped up their case against murder defendant John William King after 43 witnesses, need to prove Byrd was alive at the time of his dragging in order to ask a jury to send the suspected white supremacist to death row.

"He was being dragged behind a vehicle, and he would try to probably relieve the severe pain that was being inflicted on him by being dragged on his back or elbows," Dr. Tommy Brown, a pathologist from nearby Beaumont, said, explaining how Byrd's heels had been ground to the bone. "These would indicate he is trying to get some pressure off other areas."

Also Monday, a Jasper County jail administrator said authorities intercepted a letter written by King and intended to be smuggled to one of his co-defendants, Lawrence Brewer, in which he expresses pride in the crime and said he realized he might have to die for it.

"Regardless of the outcome of this, we have made history," King said in the note, which he signed with a Ku Klux Klan symbol and Nazi salute.

Before defense attorneys began their side of the case, jurors Monday also watched an 11-minute video made by authorities the day after Byrd's body was found, retracing the nearly three-mile dragging route.

But the jury of 11 whites and one black studied most intently the 14 crime-scene photographs, delivered to them individually in black folders.

Some were tight-lipped, one tried to suppress a facial twitch, alternating his glance between the photos and King, who sat emotionless, his elbow on the table and his chin in his hand.

King's father and a female relative of Byrd left the courtroom even before Brown appeared. Some of the other family members who stayed cried.

"It's my opinion, while being dragged, Mr. Byrd was conscious and was attempting to relieve the pain and injuries he was receiving," Brown said. "I think we all know how much brush burn abrasions, like if you fall and slide on a surface with your hands — that's very painful — and this would have been very painful to him."

"He would probably swap one portion of his body for the other, trying to get relief as he was being dragged," he said.

Prosecutors need to show a second crime was being committed, specifically the kidnapping of Byrd, in order to ask jurors to give King the death penalty. Conviction on the capital murder charge gives jurors, who could get the case as early as Tuesday, two punishment options: life in prison or death by injection.

The fatal wound would have occurred about two-thirds of the way through the grisly journey in the early-morning hours of June 7.

Asked if Byrd was conscious for a portion of the dragging along Huff Creek Road before his head was torn off, Brown replied: "That's correct."

In other prosecution testimony Monday, a police detective said King wrote racist graffiti on the door of his jail cell. He also inscribed on the door: "Shawn Berry is a snitch-ass traitor."

Berry, who also faces trial on the charges, gave an affidavit when he was arrested that led to the arrests of King and Brewer, who were prison mates at the Beto Unit near Palestine. Their trials have not yet been set.

King scratched into the door his prison name, "Possum" with a double-Nazi lightning bolt "SS" as part of the signature, Clifton Orr, a police detective, testified.

Prosecutors have said King, covered in racist tattoos, intended to start his own racist gang in Jasper, and King's murder was meant to draw attention to it and be part of a gang initiation rite.

Forensic evidence ties King and his two friends, Brewer, 31, and Berry, 24, to a scuffle with Byrd along a logging road, where authorities say Byrd was taken in the back of Berry's pickup truck after given a ride while he walked home from a party.

Cigarette butts found at the scene where Byrd is thought to have been beaten and chained to Berry's truck match the DNA of all three. A lighter engraved with King's prison nickname — Possum — and three interlocking K's was found at the scene along with Byrd's wallet.

The name "Possum" and the three-K Klan symbol also were signed by King on the letter he delivered to Brewer in the Jasper County Jail.

In a conversation with King after his release from prison for a burglary conviction, King told a girlfriend he was "going to make himself well-known from doing something," Brandy Viator Eagleson testified, "but he didn't mention what."

Two Texas Grammy nominees prove stardom can be learned

LEVELLAND (AP) — Big-city record producers have often said that star quality and stage savvy can't be taught in school.

Folks in Levelland hope to prove that notion wrong when two alumni of South Plains College's (SPC) commercial music program — Natalie Maines of the Dixie Chicks and Lee Ann Womack — compete at the 41st annual Grammy Awards Wednesday night.

Womack is nominated for best female country vocal performance while the Dixie Chicks, long known

around Texas for their contemporary -country sound, are nominated for three awards, including best new artist and best country album.

"Lee Ann is a very energetic, enthusiastic performer who gave 100 percent every performance at SPC," recalled her instructor, John Hartin, chairman of the creative arts department and creator of the commercial music program. "Natalie has incredible musical energy and takes command of any material she is performing. I certainly hope they both win a Grammy. I feel that they are

the ones who ought to win."

The program teaches students the skills they need to walk out and become professional musicians, from song-writing and performing, to navigating the industry, to writing music for instruments they do not know how to play.

Womack graduated in 1985 while Maines finished in 1994.

Hartin, who traveled the country with his band "The Classics" in the late '60s, took a position at South Plains College in 1975 because he wanted to escape the sleepless nights.

Electropropos could benefit A&M

AUSTIN (AP) — General Land Office discounted electric public entities under state officials raise another \$1 billion for schools.

This amendment win-win for the children of Texas payers of Texas send more money education and by the pressure to property taxes, commissioner David said.

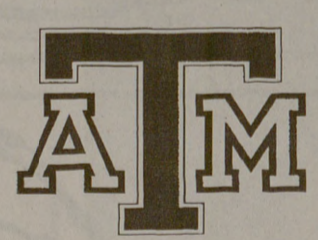
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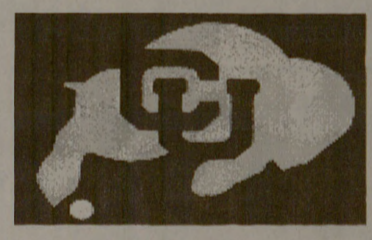
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