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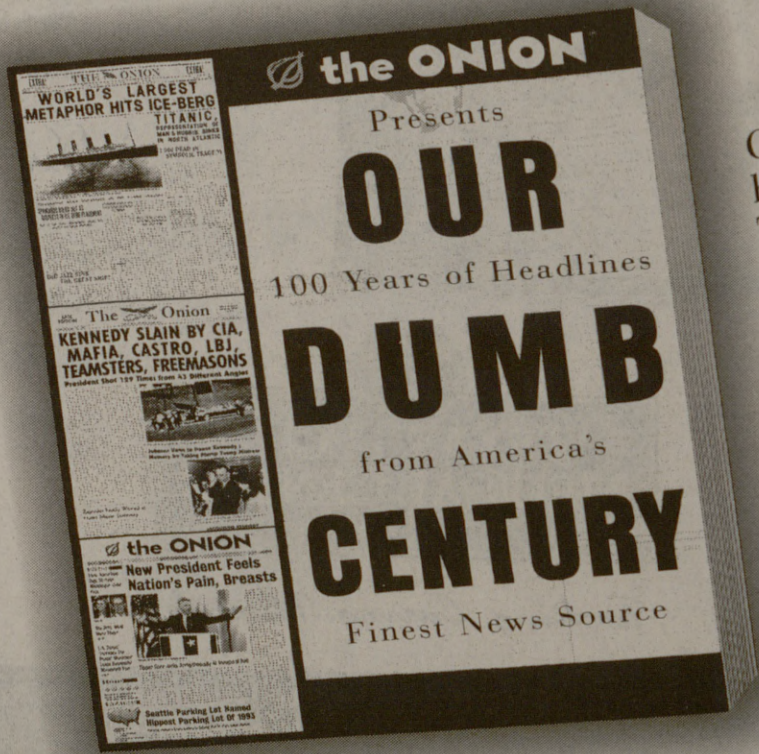
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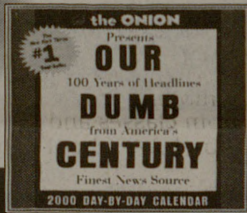


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NATION

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Microsoft, government make final arguments

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the government and Microsoft Corp. wrapped up their historic antitrust trial yesterday, lawyers alternately portrayed the software producer as a vigilant monopolist or as a company that fights tough but legally in the bareknuckles high-tech industry.

Citing dozens of internal emails and sworn testimony already in evidence, government lawyers portrayed Microsoft as ruthless in trying to protect the dominance of its Windows software. Microsoft's flagship product runs most personal computers and is largely responsible for the vast wealth of the world's richest man, billionaire company chair Bill Gates.

"There are no other lawful situations in which a company has done what Microsoft has done," Justice Department lawyer David Boies said.

He accused the company of having "used its power to squelch potential competitors to keep them from emerging."

Microsoft lawyer John Warden criticized what he called the gov-

ernment's "astounding failures of proof," together with "red herrings, lies, misstatements and omissions" offered during 76 days of testimony.

"There are no other lawful situations in which a company has done what Microsoft has done."

— David Boies
Justice Department lawyer

Warden charged that the antitrust case, filed under the Sherman Act, was largely driven by complaints from Microsoft's jealous industry rivals, including America Online Inc., the former Netscape Communications Corp., Sun Microsystems Inc., Apple Computer Inc. and IBM.

"The government should not be siding with Microsoft's opponents," Warden said. He said they

are "entirely capable of doing it themselves."

America Online recently recruited Netscape for and hired an executive as chief technology officer.

Yesterday marked the lawyers' final arguments in the case prior to U.S. District Judge Penfield Jackson's first phase verdict, which could be as early as next month.

The judge, unusually yesterday, offered no insight into how he is formulating his decision.

During the trial, Jackson asked pointed questions of witnesses and lawyers, sometimes affecting financial markets and the tenor of his voice. But packed courtroom galleries remained inscrutable through hours of closing arguments.

Stephen Houck, lead lawyer for 19 states suing Microsoft in Justice Department, told the company's "unshakable hold" over such software probably hundreds of millions of dollars.

Board calls for new bus standards

WASHINGTON (AP) — After a three-year study, the National Transportation Safety Board decided yesterday against recommending seat belts in school buses. Belts can sometimes increase injuries to children, the board said.

All five of the board's members voted unanimously to recommend the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) expand standards designed to keep children safely contained in their seating rows.

The safety board wants current standards, which require children be protected in a cocoon of padded seats and high seat backs, expanded within the next two years so children will have a better chance of remaining inside a bus during a side collision or vehicle rollover.

Engineers said that could be accomplished in a variety of ways, including increasing the height of seat backs, installing arm rests or replacement of the standard bus bench seat with sculpted, bucket-type seats.

In addition, the safety board urged NHTSA to develop standards for construction of roofs and in motor coaches within the next two years to require new buses to meet those standards.

The board found in many accidents that larger windows in tour buses pop out and passengers are ejected. Missing windows also can reduce roof strength.

Board engineers believe window and roof strength can be strengthened and the glass coated so it does not shatter upon impact.

In a final recommendation, the board urged buses to be equipped with data recorders starting in 2001 to aid in future accident investigations.

Right now, school bus design is close to standard, with provisions for weld strength, roof sign and rollover survivability. Motor coach type of bus used by Greyhound — have more protection standards.

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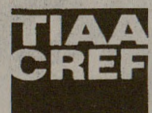
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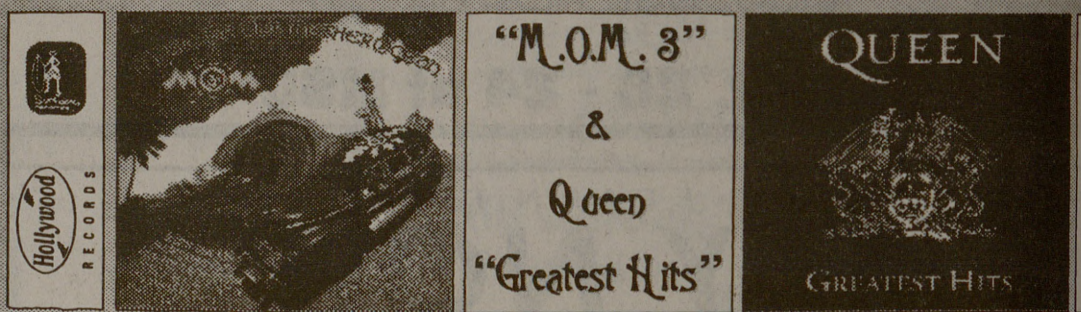
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