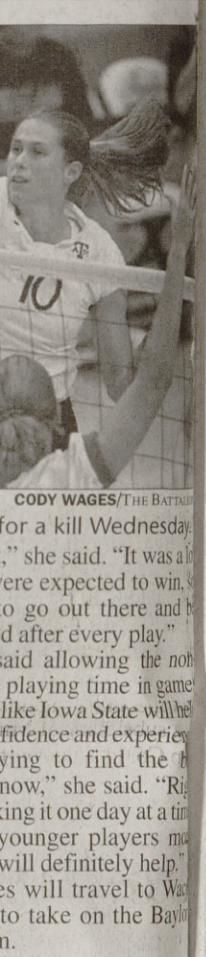


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Racial profiling likely, report says

DALLAS (AP) — State troopers are more likely to ticket African American drivers than whites in many of Texas' rural counties, according to a statistical analysis published Wednesday.

In The Dallas Morning News' study, researchers who reviewed 1999 traffic tickets written by troopers found that in 28 mostly rural Texas counties, African Americans received twice the number that were given to the general driving population.

"There's no way you can explain this level of variation except there's got to be some kind of intent involved," said Gary Bledsoe, president of the state National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter.

The data noted the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) officers did not denote Hispanic drivers when writing tickets, and therefore Hispanics could not be included in the study.

The analysis conducted by the newspaper included figures on 894,702 traffic tickets issued last year by DPS troopers.

It found that statewide, African Americans received about the same proportion of tickets — 10 percent — as their statewide driving-age population who garner 11 percent of the tickets issued.

But in 84 of 193 counties, African Americans received more tickets than expected, compared with 28 counties where whites received more tickets than anticipated.

In another 28 counties, African Americans received at least double the number of tickets expected. Five of those counties do not have an interstate highway. The study compared the percentage of tickets issued, by race, with the racial demographics of the county where they were issued.

Recording of traffic stops by DPS

troopers, which was revealed last month, has been defended by the

"There's no way you can explain this level of variation except there's got to be some kind of intent involved."

— Gary Bledsoe
President of Texas NAACP

agency, which began keeping records in response to public concern about racial profiling.

Civil-rights leaders said The Morning News analysis under-

scored the idea that African American motorists are targeted by law enforcement along state highways through the profiling practice.

But others who studied the figures, including statistics professors, said no conclusions about racial profiling can be drawn because a key element is missing: the number of minority drivers on any given highway.

James Francis, chairman of the Department of Public Safety Board, said he believes the study is fundamentally flawed because it compares ticketed drivers with each county's racial makeup — but does not take into account that highway travelers might be from another place.

"I'm not going to start a massive investigation unless and until there is some indication that something is going on," said Francis, criticizing the implication that troopers drew upon racial profiling techniques.

HMOs to face legal actions

HOUSTON (AP) — Texas' leading doctors' group is becoming more aggressive about suing health plans on behalf of its members for slow-paying or not paying necessary patients' services.

The Texas Medical Association's policy-making body has passed a resolution to begin litigating over perceived abuses, such as not paying doctors enough for their work or using administrative obstacles to slow payment, according to the Texas Journal of The Wall Street Journal.

"Doctors are just so frustrated with the system that's in place they feel like they have to enforce the laws themselves," Rocky Wilcox, the association's general counsel, told the newspaper in its Wednesday editions.

Until now, the physicians' group has concentrated on legislative rather than judicial action on behalf of members. But individual doctors under contract to health maintenance organizations have previously filed lawsuits claiming to be improperly reimbursed.

Lawyers for the Austin-based association are considering whether to join a lawsuit like one filed last year by Dr. Todd Samuelson, a Fort Worth ear, nose and throat specialist, against United Healthcare of Texas Inc., a subsidiary of Minneapolis-based United Health Group Co. in state court in Fort Worth, Wilcox said.

Papers filed in that lawsuit contend that United reduced Samuelson's compensation in violation of his contract. A hearing to determine whether it should be treated as a class action on behalf of other Texas physicians under contract with United is scheduled for Nov. 2 before Judge Thomas Wilson Lowe III.

"We believe we followed the terms of the provider agreement," a United spokesman said, contending that the lawsuit, seeking unspecified damages, was meritless.

Several Texas law firms, which Wilcox declined to name, have agreed to take cases like the Samuelson lawsuit and others that the association may file or join on behalf of doctors on a contingency basis, with lawyers receiving a fixed portion of any judgment — or nothing if the case is lost.

Such lawsuits are unnecessary, according to the leading industry group representing health plans.

"We would prefer to continue to work on these things and avoid litigation," said Leah Rummel, head of the Austin-based Texas Association of Health Plans, a lobby group.

Representatives of large health plans meet regularly with the TMA to discuss individual physician complaints, she said, and is drafting a joint proposal to create a standard form for pre-authorizing services and making referrals to specialists.

News in Brief

Testimony begins in inheritance trial

HOUSTON (AP) — After two days of opening statements in which former Playboy Playmate of the Year Anna Nicole Smith was alternately described as a grieving widow and a money-hungry stripper, jurors faced their first full day of testimony.

At stake in the probate trial is the fortune of the former stripper and model's late husband, J. Howard Marshall II, who died at age 90 in 1995.

During opening statements Tuesday, defense attorney Jeff Chambers said Smith had so little respect for her husband that she would rarely ever give him the five minutes of telephone companionship he wanted each day.

Several times, Smith turned to her lawyers to display her disgust, often tossing her head defiantly.

Olajuwon criticized for real estate projects

HOUSTON (AP) — Some local real estate observers credit Houston Rockets star Hakeem Olajuwon with blocking more than basketballs.

They say his unwillingness to develop some downtown real estate has blocked ongoing revitalization of the city's core, the Texas Journal of The Wall Street Journal reported Wednesday.

Rather than move forward with publicized plans to redevelop some of the seven downtown properties he has acquired since 1994, the NBA's all-time shot blocker's buildings are "being inventoried and mothballed," according to downtown developer Bill Franks.

Perhaps Olajuwon's best-known property is the long-abandoned World Trade Center, across from Enron Field. Olajuwon beat out several other bidders to buy a 10-year lease for \$400,000, then announced plans to convert the eyesore into condominiums or a hotel.

He and his partners decided against the ideas,

however. Only one of Olajuwon's properties has seen any redevelopment activity.

"I look at each property separately," Olajuwon said. "Whether I decide to develop or sell, it's a business decision."

"Whether I decide to develop or sell, it's a business decision."

— Hakeem Olajuwon
Houston Rockets center

He added that his adherence to Islam prohibits him from certain activities, such as paying interest on borrowed money or dealing in alcohol sales, which largely eliminates the hotel business.

As a result, the World Trade Center continues

to be a blight in an area rejuvenated because of the nearby ballpark.

Jack Rains, former chairman of the Harris County-Houston Sports Authority, was among those trying to buy the graffiti-stained building initially with hopes of razing it and creating a park. He has remained critical of Olajuwon's handling of the site.

"The building has sat there for two years, and all he's done is show it to people to sell it," Rains said. "They've been acquiring properties and announcing grandiose plans and then wind up doing a lot less than they say they're going to do."

Others say Olajuwon is just being a good businessman, buying low and selling high.

"He's just trying to find good deals, just like any other developer or investor," said downtown broker Reggie Bowman of Reggie Bowman Properties, who has worked with Olajuwon. "He's a smart investor."

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Acct 230	Part I Tue Oct 10 11pm	Part II Wed Oct 11 11pm		
Finc 341 <i>This is the only time being offered</i>	Part I Mon Oct 9 7pm-10pm	Part II Tue Oct 10 7pm-10pm	Part III Wed Oct 11 7pm-9pm	Part IV Sun Oct 15 7pm-9pm
Info 303 Anthony	Part I Sun Oct 8 7pm-10pm	Part II Mon Oct 9 7pm-10pm	Part III Tue Oct 10 7pm-10pm	Coming next week: Egon 203 (Nelson), Math 141/166, Math 142, & Mktg 309
Info 303 Stein	Part I Sun Oct 8 5pm-7pm	Part II Mon Oct 9 5pm-7pm	Part III Tue Oct 10 5pm-7pm	
Info 305 Anthony	Part I Sun Oct 8 10pm-1am	Part II Mon Oct 9 10pm-1am	Part III Tue Oct 10 10pm-1am	
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BAIT (R)	1:40 4:25 7:25 10:05
BASIC INSTINCT (R)	12:50
BRING IT ON (PG-13)	12:25 2:55 5:25 8:00 10:30
COYOTE UGLY (PG-13)	11:50 2:15 4:45 7:20 9:45 12:15
DUETS (R)	11:40 2:15 4:40 7:15 10:00 12:40
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REMEMBER THE TITANS (PG)	11:35 12:10 2:05 2:40 4:35 5:10 7:15 7:45 9:50 10:20 12:30
SPACE COWBOYS (PG-13)	1:25 4:10 7:10 9:55 12:45
THE CELL (R)	11:35 2:00 4:30 7:20 9:50 12:20
THE REPLACEMENTS (PG-13)	11:45 2:20 5:05 7:40 10:20 12:50
THE WATCHER (R)	12:20 2:45 5:15 7:50 10:25 12:55
URBAN LEGENDS: FINAL CUT (R)	12:05 2:25 4:55 7:25 9:55 12:55 12:40 3:05 5:30 8:05 10:35
WHAT LIES BENEATH (PG-13)	1:00 4:00 7:00 10:00 12:50

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