



AGGIELIFE:
Texas country artist
to head up Bryant
concert Saturday
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Volume 111 • Issue 5 • 16 pages

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Prosecutors, accuser drop case against Bryant

By Jon Sarche
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EAGLE, Colo. — The criminal case against Kobe Bryant case collapsed Wednesday as prosecutors said they had no choice but to drop the sexual assault charge because the NBA star's accuser no longer wanted to participate.

Bryant, whose trial had been days from opening arguments, responded with an apology to the woman who had accused him and whose civil suit for damages is still pending.

"Although I truly believe this encounter between us was consensual, I recognize now that she did not and does not view this incident the same way I did," Bryant said. "I now understand how she feels that she did not consent to this encounter."

With the parents of the 20-year-old alleged victim looking on, District Judge Terry Ruckriegle threw out the case under a deal that means no charges will be refiled. Neither Bryant nor his accuser was in the courtroom.

The dismissal marks a stunning turn in the high-

profile case against one of the NBA's brightest young stars. For months, prosecutors had insisted they had a strong enough case to win a conviction beyond a reasonable doubt.

Instead, prosecutors backed away just days before opening statements were scheduled to begin on Tuesday. Jury selection was scheduled to wrap up this week.

District Attorney Mark Hurlbert told Ruckriegle the woman did not want to testify or otherwise participate in the trial.

Outside the courthouse, Hurlbert said the decision to drop the case "is not based upon a lack of belief in the victim — she is an extremely credible and an extremely brave young woman."

"Our belief in her has not wavered over the past year ... Ultimately, we respect her decision 100 percent," Hurlbert said.

Bryant said the civil case against him "will be decided by and between the parties directly in-



BRYANT

volved in the incident and will no longer be a financial or emotional drain on the citizens of the state of Colorado."

"I also want to make it clear that I do not question the motives of this young woman," Bryant said. "No money has been paid to this woman. She has agreed that this statement will not be used against me in the civil case."

The woman's attorney, John Clune, said the alleged victim has been through an extremely difficult time since she alleged she was raped, and that she was disturbed by a series of courthouse mistakes that included the release of her name and medical history. The woman has been the subject of death threats and relentless media coverage.

"It is her sincere belief that when this case ends, she does not want to be brought back into the criminal process," Clune said. "The difficulties that this case has imposed on this woman the past year are unimaginable."

Bryant, 26, the married father of a 19-month-old daughter, has said he had consensual sex with the then-19-year-old employee of a Vail-area resort

where he stayed last summer. Had he been convicted, the Los Angeles Lakers star would have faced four years to life in prison or 20 years to life on probation and a fine up to \$750,000.

Bryant apologized to the victim "for my behavior that night and for the consequences she has suffered in the past year."

"Although this year has been incredibly difficult for me personally, I can only imagine the pain she has had to endure," said Bryant, who also apologized to her family, his family and friends and the citizens of Eagle.

Legal experts said a series of court rulings hurt the prosecution's case, including a decision allowing the woman's sex life in the days surrounding her encounter with Bryant to be admitted as evidence. This was expected to bolster the defense contention that she slept with someone after leaving Bryant and before she went to a hospital exam — a potentially key blow to her credibility.

The pending civil case could allow defense attorneys to argue the woman had a financial motive to accuse Bryant of assault.

Cheney, Miller assail Kerry as protests continue

By David Espo
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK - Vice President Dick Cheney unleashed a stinging attack on Sen. John Kerry Wednesday night, ridiculing him as a politician who has made a career out of changing his mind. "More wrong, more weak and more wobbly than any other national figure," agreed Sen. Zell Miller, a Democratic keynoter at the Republican National Convention.

"As a war protester, Kerry blamed our military," said the Georgia senator in a fiery speech that drew repeated ovations from the GOP delegates in the hall. "As a senator, he voted to weaken our military."

The vice president hailed President Bush as a "superb commander in chief" who has helped restore the economy since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 and will lead the nation to victory in the war on terror. Bush "does not deal in empty threats and halfway measures," Cheney said in a prime-time speech at the convention podium delivered to a nationwide television audience.

Kerry spokesman Joe Lockhart instantly accused Republicans of "slash-and-burn politics" and said it won't work. "Dick Cheney and Zell Miller looked like angry and grumpy old men," he said.

Republicans launched their double-barreled attack on Bush's Democratic opponent as the president campaigned his way into the



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Delegates cheer as the nomination of President Bush is made official during the fourth session of the Republican National Convention at Madison Square Garden in New York on Wednesday. Vice President Dick Cheney and Sen. Zell Miller spoke out against presidential candidate John Kerry at the convention.

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Collegiate Readership Program returns to Texas A&M campus

By Jibrán Najmi
THE BATTALION

Due to the success of its four-week trial run in March, the Collegiate Readership Program has returned to Texas A&M this year.

The program provides free Monday through Friday issues of The Dallas Morning News, The New York Times, The Houston Chronicle and USA Today to all A&M students at nine on-campus locations.

"Our goal is to give students access to these national papers all year around, so that ultimately they can apply the things they learn in class to the things that are happening in the world around them," said Chris Diem, executive vice president for the Student Government Association and the coordinator for the Readership Program.

Students can access the newspapers by swiping their student ID cards in the newly placed machines, which will ensure that only students are taking the papers.

"I want to stress the fact that the machines do not charge your ID or take off AggieBucks," Diem said. "It's exactly like accessing your dorm — it just proves that you are a student and that the pa-

pers are going to the right people."

The Collegiate Readership program is made possible through contracts with several national newspapers that provide the papers to universities at reduced prices. The Division of Student Affairs covers the costs of the program, and thus is provided to students at no charge. Diem stressed that no student service fees were used to fund the program.

Feedback from the student body has been positive. "I'm really excited that the Readership Program is coming back this year, as it brings me news that I would not usually go out of my way to get," said Ronetha Williams, a junior political science major.

Josh McFarland, a junior biomedical sciences major, said the program will open the eyes of many students to world events and issues.

"There are many Aggies who are very passionate about many different issues, but they don't really know enough about them to have an intelligent discussion," McFarland said.

David Jarrard, a junior accounting major, said he never took part in the program last semester because he had already subscribed to a newspaper. He said he will continue to read newspapers

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Task force suspended Suspension to make way for investigation

By Jibrán Najmi
THE BATTALION

The Presidential Task Force, appointed by Texas A&M President Robert M. Gates to investigate an Aug. 21 University apartment fire, has been asked by Brazos County District Attorney Bill Turner to suspend investigations until the completion of a criminal investigation.

"Law enforcement has an obligation when someone dies of unnatural causes to evaluate the case until we're completely convinced it was not criminal," Turner said.

The July 31 explosion at the University Apartments on Hensel Drive killed 4-year-old Lamiya Zahin and severely burned her pregnant mother and paternal grandparents. The explosion prompted Gates to form the Task Force.

The District Attorney also requested that A&M officials withhold any documents or files pertaining to the University Apartments, prior to the

completion of the investigation.

In a statement released on Monday, Gates said the University would fully comply with Turner's request. He added that he fully intends to have the task force convene and complete its work within 30 days, after Turner's investigation is complete.

"Public release of records related to the University Apartments at this time will interfere with the investigation and detection of crime," Turner said. "However, as soon as our investigation is complete, the public will be made privy all of those documents."

Turner declined comment on whether any foul play or sabotage is being investigated or if there are possible charges that could stem from this probe.

"I think it's improper to speculate about the results of an investigation prior to the completion of our final report and investigation," Turner said.

Cynthia Lawson, executive director of the

See Task force on page 2A

Vet school looks for success through change

By Liang Liang
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine recently changed its name to the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (CVMB) to reflect the college's commitment in biomedical research and attract more high-quality faculty and students.

The CVMB attracted \$20 million per year for past three years for basic biomedical research.

"We requested to add 'and Biomedical Sciences' to our masthead in recognition of the importance of basic biomedical sciences as

the foundation of veterinary medical knowledge, and our obligation as a modern veterinary medical college at a research university to contribute to that body of knowledge," said H. Richard Adams, Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (CVMB).

After collective efforts that lasted more than a decade, the CVMB received approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the A&M University System Board of Regents in July and August, respectively, to have the new masthead and new names for three departments in the college.

"These changes better reflect the depth and breadth of veterinary medical science today and our commitment to future biomedical scientists at both the undergraduate and graduate levels," Adams said.

The CVMB of A&M, which was established in 1919, has been the largest college of veterinary medicine in Texas. According to the college's follow-through records, 15 percent of the successful medical and dental school applicants to Texas Health Science Center come from the college's

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Readership Returns

The Collegiate Readership Program has returned to campus this year. Students can get copies of The Dallas Morning News, The Houston Chronicle, The New York Times and USA Today by swiping their Aggie Cards (for no charge) in machines at these nine on-campus locations.



- Blocker
- Sbis
- MSC
- Ag Cafe
- Zachry
- Evans Library
- Commons Lobby
- Bush School
- Wehner

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