

# Second man given death in dragging murder

## Third supremacist to go on trial next month in racial-motive killing

BRYAN, Texas (AP) — A white supremacist was sentenced yesterday to die by lethal injection for dragging a black man to his death on a rural road.

Lawrence Russell Brewer is the second man to get the death penalty for the June 7, 1998, killing of James Byrd Jr., who was chained to the bumper of a pickup truck and dragged for three miles along a bumpy country road northeast of Jasper.

Mr. Byrd's sister, Mary Verrett, said her family was relieved.

"He had his day in court," she said. "The jurors said what we want to say to him."

Brewer, 32, joins John William King, convicted in February, on death row. A third white supremacist, 24-year-old Shawn Allen Berry, will be tried next month.

The Brazos County jury that convicted Brewer on Monday deliberated for 14 hours Wednesday and yesterday before deciding on a punishment.

State District Judge Monte Lawlis pronounced the sentence as Brewer's mother, seated behind her son in the courtroom, dabbed her eye with a tissue.

Brewer's attorney, Doug Barlow, said his client "had resigned himself to this."

"He said to me, 'I'll be all right,'" Mr. Barlow said.

About an hour into their talks yesterday, jurors asked to see photos of Brewer's tattoos, which include a burning cross, SS lightning bolts and Ku Klux Klan sym-



Lawrence Russell Brewer reacts to the death sentence imposed on him yesterday in a Texas court.

bols. They also wanted a photo of Brewer with his family.

The jury on Wednesday reviewed some of Brewer's letters and a portion of his testimony that described events immediately preceding Mr. Byrd's death.

In closing argument Wednesday, Jasper County District Attorney Guy James Gray said the facts of the slaying showed Brewer is a continuing danger and should be condemned.

"The degree of pain they were



Sisters of slain James Byrd Jr. thank the prosecution and jury yesterday in Brazos County, Texas, after a second killer is sentenced to death. From left, they are Mary Verrett, Mylinda Washington and Bobbie Brown.

willing to inflict on this man is an indication of the degree of racial commitment," Mr. Gray said.

A defense attorney argued that Brewer, a convicted burglar, had no history of violence in prison and should get a life term.

Prosecutors contended Brewer was the racist ideologue who

taught King and Mr. Berry his views, and that his position as "Exalted Cyclops" in a racist group showed the depth of his commitment to racism.

Mr. Byrd, a former vacuum cleaner salesman, was abducted early on June 7, 1998, and taken to a remote area northeast of Jasper.

His ankles were harnessed with a 24½-foot logging chain to the bumper of a pickup truck and he was dragged for three miles.

His battered torso, minus his head, neck and an arm, was dumped between a black church and cemetery where it was found a few hours after daylight.

# Jobless claims drop in wake of Floyd Reforms

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New claims for unemployment benefits dropped unexpectedly last week to the lowest level in a quarter of a century. But economists chalked up much of the decline to Hurricane Floyd.

A total of 272,000 Americans filed new claims for jobless benefits for the week that ended Saturday, down 17,000 from the previous week, the Labor Department said yesterday.

That was the fewest since Jan. 5, 1974, when claims totaled 269,000. Many economists had forecast a rise in last week's claims to 290,000.

Some private economists believe Hurricane Floyd prevented some unemployed people from getting to claims offices. Labor Department officials acknowledged that part of the drop could have been related to the hurricane, but had no specific data on the storm's effects.

"It's a temporary blip," said economist Richard Yamarone of Argus Research Corp. "It is not in-

dicative of a worsening in the already tight labor market. It's unrelated to true economic conditions."

He and other economists expect claims to increase in next week's report, putting them more in line with levels seen over the last few months.

However, last week was the ninth in a row with claims below 300,000. Economists consider such jobless claim levels an indication of a tight labor market.

While that's good news for workers, it is potentially worrisome to economists. Their fear: Employers scrambling for workers woo them with higher wages and benefits, and those costs may drive up prices and spark inflation.

Thus far, inflation is well behaved.

The Federal Reserve said Wednesday in a survey on business conditions around the nation that there have been "few reports of acceleration in nominal wages and

salaries" even as companies find it difficult to hire qualified workers for job openings. The survey noted that some areas reported "a substantial upswing in the cost of health-care benefits," while consumer prices are stable.

The Labor Department said the four-week average for claims, which smoothes out week-to-week volatility, also was down last week, to 285,750. That was the lowest level since April 21, when the four-week average was 284,500 claims.

"The tight labor market remains the Fed's chief concern," said Merrill Lynch economist Karen Dexter. She expects the nation's unemployment rate in September to slip to 4.1 percent from its current 29 year low of 4.2 percent. The unemployment report will be released in early October.

For the week ending Sept. 11, the Labor Department said, 42 states and territories reported decreases in new jobless-claim applications, while 10 reported increases. The state data lag a week behind the national figures.

## Reforms of child support pay off States collected \$14.3 billion in '98

By Cheryl Wetzstein  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Reforms in the nation's child-support enforcement system have led to record-high collections and other accomplishments, the Clinton administration told a House hearing yesterday.

In fiscal year 1998, states collected a record \$14.3 billion in child support from 4.5 million cases, Olivia A. Golden, an assistant secretary in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), told the House Ways and Means subcommittee on human resources.

In addition, she said that:

- A record 1.5 million paternities were established. Many of these came from fathers who voluntarily signed forms in hospitals when their babies were born.

- All 50 states and the District are reporting employment data to the new National Directory of New Hires. Some 2.8 million delinquent parents have been found by matching this data with child-support cases.

- Parents who owe at least \$5,000 in child support can be denied passports. Passports are now denied to as many as 40 parents per day and more than \$2.2 million has been collected from delinquent parents who have paid up to get their passports back.

- Tax-intercept and related programs have collected some \$1.2 billion in child support.

- Data supplied by six financial institutions has helped identify \$93 million in assets of 77,000 delinquent parents.

Armed with this information, "states can place a lien on or seize all or part of the accounts identified," Miss Golden told a pleased House panel.

The HHS also said that \$10 million issued in 1997 to improve non-custodial parents' access to their children had gone to programs that served 20,000 people. Many of these parents — most of whom are fathers — received parenting education and mediation services.

One area, however, where reform has lagged is the establishment of "state disbursement units" that are supposed to send child-support checks to custodial parents within two business days.

So far, only 21 states and the District have units in place, said Miss Golden, citing computer problems.

In written testimony to the panel, an advocacy group yesterday criticized states for withholding at least \$68 million of the child support they had collected. The actual number is certainly higher, as data from California, Florida and other high-population states was not available, said Geraldine Jensen, president of the Association for Children for Enforcement of Support.

The Washington Times

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10/10/96

WR -  
Child support  
Statistics

NOTE TO BRUCE REED AND RAHM EMANUEL:

Attached is a press release on the record \$1 billion in child support collected by withholding non-paying parents' tax returns - the statistic the President used in his Sept. 28 radio address. I would like to send this press release, along with state-specific numbers, to Robert Pear next week. I will just pick a random day to send it unless you have other suggestions.

Thanks -  
Melissa

# HHS NEWS

DRAFT # 239

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## RECORD AMOUNT OF OVER \$1 BILLION COLLECTED BY IRS OF DELINQUENT CHILD SUPPORT

The Clinton administration reported today that a record of over \$1 billion in delinquent child support was collected by the federal government from federal income tax refunds for tax year 1995. This amount was 23 percent higher than the previous year and up 57 percent since 1993. Over 1.2 million families benefited.

"The Clinton administration is improving the future of millions of children with record child support collections and paternities established," said HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala. "At the administration's insistence, the new welfare reform law includes the toughest child support measures ever enacted. This will help us build even further on the state/federal child support enforcement partnership to better ensure that all parents provide for their children."

Under the tax offset program, state child support enforcement agencies report names of parents who owe child support payments and the overdue amount to the HHS Administration for Children and Families. These persons are notified in writing of the amount which will be withheld to cover their child support debt and that amount is then deducted from their income tax refund. The delinquency may also be reported to credit reporting agencies.

- More -

"Protecting children by demanding responsibility of parents is critical to this nation's future. For the millions of children still in need, we have a new message of hope," said David G. Ross, deputy director, Office of Child Support Enforcement. "The Clinton administration, working with our state and local government partners, is committed to implementing the new child support law quickly and smoothly. No longer will delinquent parents leave their children for the taxpayers to support."

Parents whose children receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children and whose unpaid child support totals \$150 or more may have their federal income tax refunds withheld. For tax year 1995, refunds were withheld for over 850,000 families receiving AFDC. For families who do not receive AFDC, an accrued debt of \$500 can activate an offset. Over 350,000 non-AFDC families benefited from the program this year.

For tax year 1995, the average collection was \$847 for non-AFDC families and \$827 for AFDC cases. The cost of processing these cases was \$5.71 per case. Collections for tax year 1995 were made after tax returns for that year were filed in 1996 and refunds requested. Collections for 1996 will begin as income tax returns are filed in 1997.

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Note: HHS press releases are available on the World Wide Web at:  
<http://www.dhhs.gov>.