

EDITORIAL

Seale the 'Last' Case? We Doubt It.

To fill space this weekend in The Clarion-Ledger's package on the James Ford Seale case, reporter Jerry Mitchell returned to a well from which he has drunk in the past with a story headlined "Seale Case Could Be Last of Its Kind." The article is a thinly disguised prognostication that seems to pander to a perceived demographic of readers who are "tired" of civil rights cases being brought to trial. But the article flies in the face of evidence that both the federal government and Mississippians intend to prosecute any of these old civil rights cases when the facts of the case warrant it.

For Mitchell to be certain that all the worthy cold cases have been prosecuted would be to ignore recent history. The Clarion-Ledger was caught unaware by the re-emergence in 2005 of the Dee-Moore case, as Mitchell had reported in 2000 that James Ford Seale was dead. When the Jackson Free Press, Thomas Moore (brother of Charles Moore) and CBC filmmaker David Ridgen discovered that Seale was still alive, residing near Natchez, prosecution of the case was re-opened by U.S. Attorney Dunn Lampton, resulting in the trial that is now underway.

Regardless of The Clarion-Ledger's hurry to write an epitaph for this short era of civil rights prosecutions in Mississippi, the truth is that there are other cases to be investigated. The complete story of the civil rights era has not yet been told, and everyone who had a hand in wrongdoing has not yet been brought to justice. It's true that some perpetrators are dead, but not all are. While The Clarion-Ledger may be ready to call it a day, the JFP and others aren't quite done, yet. Mississippians should not be done yet, either.

For years now, The Clarion-Ledger has reported these stories as Klan murders and Klan activities. Even this past weekend in the story "Officers Reflect on Klan Probe," Mitchell painted a picture of local law enforcement in 1964 as "enemies of the Klan." But what's lost in that reporting is the complexity of the true nature of Mississippi's institutional racism in the 1950s and 1960s, when the Citizen's Council, Sovereignty Commission and Jim Crow reigned supreme. Mississippi's past is not just "old Klansmen" terrorizing "the good people." It's a tapestry of heroes, villains and victims, a history that should continue to be exposed, explored and explained.

For The Clarion-Ledger to continue this *Move along, nothing more to see here...* mentality in their reporting is to deny both our state's history and its brightest possible future. We need to continue the fact-finding and the truth-telling, and, yes, criminal convictions where warranted.

The Jackson Free Press is determined to continue to investigate and report on these cases. We encourage The Clarion-Ledger to do the same.

KEN STIGGERS

Stuck Like Chuck

Taaqweema Jenkins: "This is a Ghetto Science Team Television Network pre-Memorial Day news flash. In the wake of the gas price increase, The Sausage Sandwich Sisters (International Electric Slide Ambassadors for World Peace and Rent Money) will have a Memorial Day Electric Slide Protest Rally for World Peace and Gas Money. Here to speak on behalf of the Sausage Sandwich Sisters is Mo'tel Williams, super producer and board member of the Hair Did University Cold Wave, Pomade and Jheri Curl Council."



Mo'tel Williams: "The Sistas and I are fed up with this three dollar per gallon foolishness! I cancelled 10 national Electric Slide tours because of increasing plane fares and rental van packages.

"But I do know that Bubba Q. Citizen and Pookie D. Public will have to spend their weekend beer and grocery money on gas just to drive their hoopties to work. And you might as well close down the parks and recreation areas because poor folk cannot take road trips. But I really feel sorry for the kids, because the ice cream truck will run out of gas, for sure. And of course, rich folk will take to the highways while the poor folk will be out of the way, stuck like chuck on the front porch. On this Memorial Day weekend, join me and the Sausage Sandwich Sisters in an Electric Slide Protest for World Peace and Gas Money. Bring your protest signs, get in a line and dance until those high gas prices dip!"



KAMIKAZE

Tomorrow's Storms

As I sat and watched Fox News a few Sundays back, I had a moment of clarity.

For all of the debate we have going back and forth about the war in Iraq, for all the talk of homeland security, for all the warning that the enemy will bring the fight to our shores, all of it pales in comparison to the wrath of God and the fury of nature.

As a child, I often marveled at the images of tornadoes on TV. I confess that I'm a closet weather junkie who one day hopes to see a twister up close and live to tell the tale. But if you're one of those who have yet to give nature its props for the awesome power it can release, you're crazy! Whether it was the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, an F-4 tornado in Kansas, a tsunami in Indonesia or an earthquake in Mexico, the lives of thousands, even hundreds of thousands of people can be changed in an instant.

I watched in awe as the folks in Greensburg, Kan., saw

their entire town decimated by a deadly tornado. The storm destroyed over 95 percent of the town. Ninety-five percent! A town of 1,500, that took decades to build, completely wiped from existence in mere seconds. Those folks will have to rebuild their lives from nothing. The kids have no school. Men and women have no jobs. All because of a calamity that they, as human beings, have no control over.

Imagine that. For all our "smarts," all our arrogance, all our modern advances, do you realize that our world could be ended tomorrow? Not by war, but by natural disaster. That's why I find it ridiculous that some folks mock Al Gore and his efforts to bring more attention to the environment. Sure, he may be fanatical at times. He may even be a little hypocritical when it comes to his own personal practices. But in my opinion, it's good, common sense to be aware of what we're doing to this big green ball we call Earth.

Ours is a culture of excess. I, like many others, conduct ev-

eryday life as if Earth produces things in infinite supply. We take for granted the fact that we may slowly be eating away at our resources. It's OK as long as tragedies like Katrina or the Kansas tornadoes happen to someone else. As long as my house isn't flooded, or blown away, or ripped apart by a quake, it really doesn't matter. But it does. And it's high time that even the most uninformed layperson start asking questions about our environment and the atmosphere around.

The hurricanes are coming with more frequency, the tornadoes are getting stronger, and the oceans are rising higher. Let's not be fanatical, but let's not be stupid, either. God is telling us something: Take care of Earth, your home. Those folks in Kansas wish they had homes still to take care of. And that's the truth ... sho-nuff.



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Do you have a perspective the public needs to hear? Consider writing a 500-word "Your Turn" guest column. Please include a photograph of yourself, or call 601-362-6121, ext. 7, for more details.