

Pair of Detroit police officers found guilty of murder

DETROIT — Two former police officers were found guilty of murder in the fatal beating of a motorist during a struggle outside a crack house.

A third former officer was found innocent on a lesser charge.

Larry Nevers, 53, and Walter Budzyn, 47, were convicted of second-degree murder in Malice Green's Nov. 5 death. Robert Lessnau, 33, was acquitted of assault with intent to do great bodily harm.

Separate juries sitting simultaneously heard the two murder cases, while Lessnau opted to have Recorder's Court Judge George W. Crockett III decide his fate.

The Budzyn jury reached its verdict during the eighth day of deliberations Saturday. That decision and Crockett's, reached last week, were sealed until the Nevers jury reached its verdict on Monday.

Budzyn testified that he never hit anyone, while Nevers said he hit Green in self-defense.

All three were fired from the force after

Green's death. Budzyn and Nevers face up to life in prison; no immediate sentencing date was set. Lessnau could have gotten up to 10 years.

An autopsy showed Green, 35, died of at least 14 blows to the head and part of his scalp was torn off.

The death Nov. 5 came seven months after four white Los Angeles police officers were acquitted of state charges in the beating of black motorist Rodney King, touching off rioting. Two of the officers were later convicted of federal charges.

Green's death spurred protests because Green was black and the three defendants are white. But no testimony during the 11-week trial indicated that race was a factor in the beating.

The supervisor of the three defendants, who is black, was charged with misdemeanor neglect of duty. His trial date has not been set.

Prosecutors portrayed Nevers as an aging cop who was trying to teach Green the rules of the neighborhood by repeatedly smashing the

blood-soaked man in the head with a flashlight, demanding that he obey orders to open his hand.

Budzyn, prosecutors said, began the confrontation by leaping into Green's car and hitting him on the hands and head until his partner took over the beating.

"It was simply the exercise of raw power over one human being by others," Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Doug Baker told jurors.

The prosecutors pieced the circumstances of the death together using the testimony of Green's friends and emergency medical services technicians who arrived sometime after the friends left.

Defense lawyers attacked the credibility of the street witnesses, who admitted they smoked crack cocaine that night. They also called on expert witnesses who testified that cocaine and alcohol in Green's system contributed to his death.

In his testimony, Budzyn, on the force for 19 years before he was fired, told jurors he never hit anyone. "I didn't know he was being killed," he said. "I didn't see. He was behind me."

Nevers, who had been on the force 24 years, said Green grabbed his service revolver, and he struck Green on the head five or six times because he feared for his own life.

"He grabbed the handle of my gun on the left side in my holster," Nevers said. "I hit him in the head. I thought he was going to get my gun."

Lessnau admitted he rapped Green's knuckles to get him to open his hand, but said the EMS technicians who testified they saw him kick Green in the head area were wrong.

Community leaders predicted the city would remain calm regardless of the verdicts because the cases were tried in Detroit before predominantly black juries and a black judge—unlike the all-white suburban jury hearing the first King case.

Hostage standoff continues

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — A rightist guerrilla leader issued new conditions Monday for releasing at least 18 government officials, a day after he raised hopes of an end to Nicaragua's four-day hostage crisis by freeing 20.

Rival leftist gunmen in Managua who held 27 hostages freed two captives Monday as a goodwill gesture. They still held Vice President Virgilio Godoy, eight congressmen and at least nine journalists.

The hostage crisis involves rival groups of ex-combatants from the war between the former leftist Sandinista government and the U.S.-backed Contras that ended in 1990.

Rearmed former soldiers from both sides have clashed repeatedly with troops over the past year as President Violeta Chamorro's reconciliation policies have been folted by political enmity and a crippled economy. Unemployment runs as high as 60 percent.

Former Contras have accused the government of failing to provide the land and aid promised when they disarmed. They also claim their rivals have continued to persecute and murder them.

On Sunday, former Contras re-

leased 20 of their hostages in the northern town of Quilali and promised to free the 18 to 21 remaining.

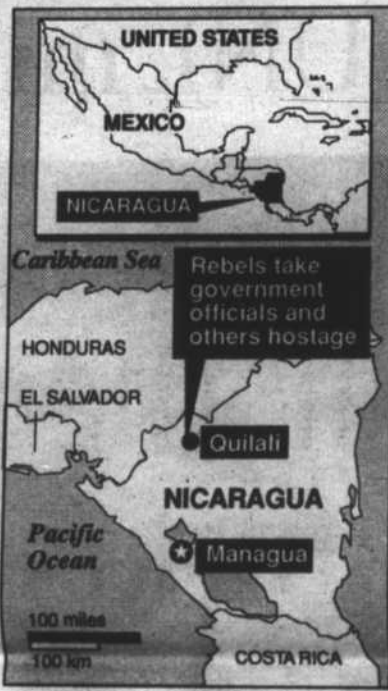
Under an accord signed Sunday by Frank Cesar, vice minister of the interior, the government promised it would not use troops against North Front 3-80 and would continue to discuss its demands.

The Contras said then that they would drop their demand for the ouster of Nicaraguan army chief Gen. Humberto Ortega and army security chief Lenin Cerna. Contras are angered by what they see as Mrs. Chamorro's decision to co-govern with the Sandinistas despite ousting them in an election in 1990.

On Monday, the group's leader, Jose Angel "The Jackal" Talavera Analiz, told reporters that "The question of Humberto Ortega and Lenin Cerna is not negotiable." He did not sign the agreement with Cesar.

"The liberty of the rest of the hostages will depend on the actions taken by the government," said the 32-year-old former Contra, whose faction includes about 400 fighters.

A government commission on Monday asked Roman Catholic Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo to help negotiate freedom for the hostages



held by the former Contras.

The soldiers said that they released the two hostages as a gesture of "humanism" and said they would not release more captives until the ex-Contras released theirs.

Kennedy assassination documents released

WASHINGTON — The National Archives released on Monday thousands of documents relating to the 1963 assassination of President Kennedy, including classified files from the Central Intelligence Agency.

Experts were hoping the documents would help answer nagging questions, including whether Lee Harvey Oswald had any ties to the U.S. government.

Thousands of documents, including files from the Warren Commission, investigative panels and congressional committees, were released at the National Archives. But it was the unveiling of 90,000 pages from the Central Intelligence Agency that attracted the most attention, since many of the CIA's records had been secret until now.

"I think that there will be a lot of interesting information," said James Lesar, director of the Assassination Archives and Research Center. "There will be plenty of information that will be of great interest to researchers."

The Warren Commission concluded in 1964 that Oswald, acting alone, killed Kennedy with a rifle from his perch in a sixth-floor window at the

Texas School Book Depository in downtown Dallas. Since then, however, numerous conspiracy theories have surfaced, revolving around whether Oswald was the lone gunman and, if he was, whether he might have been acting at the behest of the CIA, FBI or organized crime.

Commissions that have studied the assassination over the years have had access to the CIA files.

"People who believe the agency did it are paranoid, and naive to believe that they would be stupid enough to leave footprints," said Robert Blakey, a Notre Dame law professor who served as staff director for the 1978 House Select Committee that studied the assassination. Blakey, who studied volumes of CIA documents, concluded that there is "no smoking gun there."

"And if there was something we missed," Blakey noted, "if there was something truly earthshaking in it, it would have leaked out by now. It's been 30 years."

The House Select Committee concluded Kennedy was probably the victim of a conspiracy, with a second gunman firing at him but missing.

SPORTS WIRE

Baseball playoffs not entirely supported

NEW YORK — The chances are "very small" that major league players will agree to a proposed playoff format involving four division winners and four second-place teams starting next season, union chief Donald Fehr said Monday.

The owners approved the change in the playoff setup at their quarterly meetings last June, but have yet to officially vote on a new format. The owners would prefer the four division winners and the four second-place teams.

Fehr said the union is open to

negotiations, but didn't consider it likely the players will agree to the owners' current version. The owners don't think a schedule for the players' version of three division winners and a wildcard team can be in place by next season.

The additional round of playoffs was established by the owners as part of the new TV venture with ABC and NBC. Next season's playoffs are scheduled to be televised by NBC with ABC carrying the World Series.

There also have been reports

that the owners might decide to keep things the way they are until the 1995 season.

In a letter to owners' representative Richard Ravitch, Fehr wrote, "If the additional round of playoffs is a good idea, then the additional round of playoffs should begin next year, in 1994. If it is not a good idea, then we should dispense with it altogether."

Fehr said the players are concerned the playoffs and regular season will be diluted if the four second-place teams qualify.

State Wire

Kerrey vote might be harmful

OMAHA — U.S. Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Neb., acknowledged Monday that his controversial vote in favor of President Clinton's deficit-reduction plan might harm his chances for re-election in 1994.

Kerrey goes on the road this week to town hall meetings in Alliance, Chadron and Red Cloud to explain his views.

"Any serious deficit reduction effort that genuinely reduces the deficit — you have to be willing to risk your political career," Kerrey said. "You can't vote for something that cuts spending and raises taxes without somebody saying 'I won't vote for you again if you do.'"

Some Nebraskans were angry with Kerrey for his vote in favor of Clinton's deficit-reduction plan.

Kerrey, who kept Clinton waiting for his decision until nearly the last minute, ended up casting the decisive vote, tying the tally at 50-50. Vice President Al Gore broke the tie to pass the \$496 billion plan.

Following his vote, Kerrey said he felt a bit like a fugitive, though he believes he did the right thing.

Kerrey said that Nebraskans' reaction to his vote has been mixed, but "I think people understand that something had to be done and that deficit reduction's tough."

Plainview man accused of death

PIERCE — A Plainview man free on bond pending trial on charges of sexually assaulting a child in another community was held Monday without bond in the investigation of the stabbing death of a 10-year-old Pierce boy.

Pierce County Attorney Verlyn Luebke identified the man arrested as Richard C. Barnes, 23.

Luebke said he would file a charge in the death of Mitch B. Ziemer, who was stabbed repeatedly Friday in a restroom at a city park. Ziemer's body was found about 3:30 p.m.

Witnesses saw Ziemer and another boy fishing in the park Friday when a man began bothering them, authorities said. The other boy, who also is

about 10 years old, gave investigators valuable help in identifying Barnes, a veteran of the Persian Gulf War, Luebke said. Luebke declined to identify the boy.

Barnes, who is unemployed and lives with his parents in Plainview, 16 miles northwest of Pierce in northeast Nebraska, was in Pierce on Friday for a job interview, Luebke said.

Barnes was facing charges of sexually assaulting a child in Laurel in June, said Cedar County Sheriff Elliott Arens. Barnes had been freed on bond pending trial in district court.

Preliminary autopsy results indicate Ziemer died of multiple stab wounds, Luebke said.

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