nnocent verdict ends Denny beating tria

LOS ANGELES - Damian Williams was found innocent Wednesday of attempting to murder trucker Reginald Denny during the 1992 riots, capping a near-clean sweep for the defense on major charges in the case.

Spectators gasped as the court clerk read "Not guilty" in the finale of the tortured series of jury deliberations which left some jurors ill and prolonged the suspense for days.

Williams smiled and hugged his attorneys. "They didn't have a case," said defense attorney Edi Faal.

The power of prayer had led to the verdicts," said Georgiana Williams, the defendant's mother. "I'm giving the victory to Jesus." Superior Court Judge John Ouderkirk de-

clared a mistrial on one deadlocked count, assault with a deadly weapon, against co-defendant Henry Watson.

The judge ordered Watson released without bail because he had been convicted of only one misdemeanor, which has a maximum jail term

There were people who got sick. There were nerves that were frayed, and that's the only way we're going to solve the racial problem in America — to risk that type of trauma.

- Murray, South Central Los Angeles minister

of six months. Williams remained jailed. Both defendants had been jailed 17 months since their arrest.

Williams and Watson, both black, were accused of attempted murder and other charges in the attacks on Denny, who is white, and several others. Denny was dragged from his rig at a South-Central intersection and nearly beaten to death as a TV camera recorded the scene from a helicopter.

The riots swept the city April 29, 1992,

following the state acquittals in the 1991 beating of black motorist Rodney King. That beating was also videotaped.

On Monday, the racially mixed jury acquit-ted Williams and Watson of some of the most serious counts and convicted them of reduced charges in other counts. Williams was convicted of a single felony, a reduced charge of felony mayhem in the attack on Denny, and four tape were promised misdemeanor assault counts in attacks on oth-kill Denny.

Mayhem has a maximum punishment of eight years in prison. The misdemeanors carry maximum terms of six months in jail. The Rev. Cecil Murray of First African Methodist Church in the South Central neighborhood called the Denny jury "a microcosm of the larger macrocosm of America.'

"There was anger, there was resentment, there was regret," Murray said. "There were people who got sick. There were nerves that were frayed, and that's the only way we're going to solve the racial problem in Americato risk that type of trauma.

Prosecutors said Williams was the man on the videotape seen throwing a brick at Denny's head and dancing in glee. But the defense challenged the identification as well as the prosecution claim that the actions seen on the tape were proof that the defendants intended to

States strengthen gun laws after recent youth violence

DENVER - Following a summer of violence that left four children wounded by stray bullets, Colorado joined a growing number of states responding to juvenile crime with new gun laws aimed at disarming young

Nineteen states and the District of Columbia have stiff anti-gun laws and a half-dozen more are considering action. President Clinton said this week he backs a federal proposal making it illegal for minors to possess handguns under most circumstances.

Getting guns away from young people "is definitely the hottest issue in gun policy," said Denise Griffin, a researcher for the National Confer-

ence of State Legislatures.

Among a package of bills signed by Gov. Roy Romer last month is a law barring people under age 18 from

possessing handguns, except for hunting, instruction and target shooting. Convicted offenders must spend five days in jail upon arrest and up to two years in juvenile detention.

Florida has a special legislative session on crime beginning Nov. 1 in the wake of last month's arrests of young people in the fatal shootings of foreign tourists. Proposals include banning those under 18 from possessing a gun, except for hunting or marksmanship supervised by an adult. Vio-lators would face five days in jail.

Right now the laws we have in existence have no meat in them," said Lee Condon, spokeswoman for the Florida Department of Law Enforce-

"The law for juveniles has no real consequenses, and the kids know this.



Nineteen states and the District of Columbia have adopted strict anti-gun laws, and a half-dozen more are considering action.



AP/Wm. J. Castello, Alex Sibirny

it a felony, and provide a penalty for parents who allow their children to

have guns."
In Utah last week, lawmakers approved a package that Gov. Michael Leavitt plans to sign. It outlaw hand-We're looking for something to make gun possession by people under 18.

Haitian prime minister threatens to leave post

ti's embattled civilian prime minister threatened Wednesday to quit in 10 days if Haiti's army and police chiefs remain in power in defiance of a U.N. peace plan.

Prime Minister Robert Malval's comments added even more pressure to international mediators trying to implement a plan to return ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide on Oct. 30. A leading parliamentarian said lawmakers cannot complete work on the plan by that date, but a U.S. spokesman said the plan was "still not

Malval's departure could cripple international efforts to restore democracy to Haiti. He has been under considerable pressure to push Aristide for further concessions to the restive military, including a general amnesty Oct. 30 deadline.

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—Hai-sembattled civilian prime minister crimes after the 1991 coup.

Malval, in an interview with Radio Tropic FM, said the exiled president told him by phone Tuesday night that he could not come back Oct. 30 with army chief Lt. Gen. Raoul Cedras and the chief of the army's police divi-sion, Lt. Col. Joseph Michel Francois, in power. Both men helped to lead the coup that toppled the democratically elected Aristide in September 1991.

Malval said he, too, would step down if Aristide didn't come back as scheduled. "Morally, I don't want to be an accomplice of these maneuvers," Malval said in the radio broad-

An aide to the prime minister said Malval would only consider staying on if Aristide himself extended the



Space Trave

A Presentation by

John W. O'Neill, Deputy Director, NASA Mission Operations, Houston, TX

Thursday, October 21, 3:30 p.m. Nebraska Union, Georgian Suite

Growing up in Jackson, Nebraska, John O'Neill was aware his ancestors were pioneer settlers in Dakota County, but he never imagined he'd be a pioneer himself in what many consider man's final frontier. For the past 29 years, O'Neill has pursued a career his ancestors would have considered the stuff of fantasy and science fiction.

O'Neill has scaled the ranks at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to become deputy director of The Missions Operations Directorate at NASA's Johnson Space Center. His career took off soon after he graduated from the UNL College of Engineering and

Come hear O'Neill talk about NASA and the future of space travel. He'll discuss how far we've come in 30 yearsand how much more there is to learn about the universe we've only begun to explore.

Mr. O'Neill is visiting UNL as part of Master's Week.

Nelson questions high gasoline prices

STATE WIRE

OMAHA — State officials will be asked to to a new federal law requiring truckers to burn vestigate higher gasoline prices in Nebraska, cleaner fuel, also was part of President Clinton's investigate higher gasoline prices in Nebraska, Gov. Ben Nelson said Wednesday.

'On its face, it appears something is haywire. We're looking into it. We have to see what kind of evidence we have here," Nelson said during the Nebraska Association of County Officials Convention in Omaha.

Nelson said he will ask the State Energy Office and the Department of Revenue to look into the higher prices. Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad on Tuesday called for a state investigation of higher fuel prices.

A 10-cent-per-gallon increase was expected Oct. 1 because of a 4.3-cent-per-gallon increase in the federal fuel tax. The increase, due

deficit-cutting tax package.

But diesel fuel prices have jumped 25 cents to 30 cents per gallon in Nebraska and up to 40 cents per gallon in Iowa.

The Clean Air Act required that truckers burn cleaner, more expensive fuel starting Oct. . Oil industry officials said the low-sulphur fuel now required is in short supply.

The American Automobile Association re-

ported Wednesday that the average price of self-serve regular unleaded gasoline increased nationwide 5.2 cents to \$1.134 per gallon in October. Prices through Tuesday had increased an average of 3.1 cents per gallon in the region.



SPORTS WIRE

Hurricanes' Costa loses starting job

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — Frank Costa's with a loss at top-ranked Florida State on Oct. teammates have said the Miami quarterback 9. They haven't played since. has received a disproportionate amount of blame "We're still kind of down," defensive end for the team's offensive problems.

But now, it has cost him his starting job.
Costa, a junior chosen by Miami coach
Dennis Erickson to succeed 1992 Heisman Trophy winner Gino Torretta, lost his starting job to sophomore Ryan Collins.

Costa threw just four touchdown passes in Miami's first five games, and he's the first Hurricanes quarterback to be benched since Mike Rodrigue was replaced by Jim Kelly in 1979. Costa's demotion contributed to a rare subdued mood among the Hurricanes, whose national title chances sustained a severe blow

Darren Krein said.

Sixth-ranked Miami (4-1) seeks a measure of redemption Saturday night against No. 23 Syracuse (4-1-1).

However, some of the Hurricane players are not excited about the change at quarterback.

"Everybody can't put the burden on Frank," receiver Chris Jones said. "I wonder why things are coming down on him. We receivers dropped balls; we could have been blamed for the offense not moving, too. It takes 10 players besides the quarterback to do the job."

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