



Zirtzman set free

C.R. man acquitted of charges in fatal fire

By Elizabeth Kutter
The Gazette
CEDAR RAPIDS — Brian Zirtzman walked out of jail a free man Wednesday after a jury found him not guilty of murder and arson in a fire that killed a father and daughter.

"The victory belongs to the Lord, the lawyers and the jury," said Zirtzman's twin brother, Brad.

The stone-faced Zirtzman of the courtroom was all smiles as he lugged three yellow plastic bags of clothes and books to the lobby of the jail where his family greeted him. Zirtzman had been in jail since June

2003, unable to post a \$500,000 bond.

Zirtzman, 40, was accused of starting an April 5, 2003, fire in the home of his neighbors Jay Grahman and Vickie Reed-Grahman and their four children at 3755 H Ave. NE.

The fire claimed the lives of Jay Grahman, 38, and his daughter Jaymie Grahman, 6. Reed-Grahman and the other three children survived.

Law enforcement officials could not be reached to say whether Zirtzman's acquittal would prompt them to reopen the case.

Zirtzman, who lived across the street at 3748 H Ave. NE, spent the afternoon and evening of the fire socializing

► TRIAL, PAGE 6A



Jim Slosiarek/The Gazette

Brian Zirtzman (right) leaves the Linn County Jail after being found not guilty Wednesday of first-degree murder and arson. He was accused of intentionally setting a fire in Cedar Rapids that killed Jay Grahman and his daughter, Jaymie, 6, on April 5, 2003.

Robins death ruled homicide

Man died of insulin shock, examiner says

By Nicole Schuppert
The Gazette
ROBINS — Frank Chiavetta, 60, of Robins, died of insulin shock after his wife, Kimberly Chiavetta, gave him shots of the drug, Linn County Medical Examiner Don Linder said last night.

Linder ruled the Sunday death of Frank Chiavetta a homicide and said that Kimberly Chiavetta, a nurse at St. Luke's Hospital in Cedar Rap-



Frank Chiavetta
Died Sunday

ids, has signed a confession.

Frank Chiavetta died at 7:40 a.m. Sunday at St. Luke's. He was admitted Thursday afternoon.

Aspiration pneumonia

was a contributing factor in the death, Linder said.

Linder said Chiavetta was in such a deep coma that he

► HOMICIDE, PAGE 6A

IRAQ

Lawyer tapped to assist Iraq

U.S. attorney from C.R. to help establish new judicial system

By Dick Hogan
The Gazette
CEDAR RAPIDS — Charles Larson Sr., U.S. attorney for Iowa's Northern District, has been tapped by the U.S. government to help set up a judicial system in Iraq.

Larson, 69, of Cedar Rapids, has been named as the senior Justice Department adviser to the U.S. ambassador in Iraq.

Larson will be leaving soon to coordinate the Department of Justice efforts by several representatives from federal agencies in establishing a new Iraqi judicial system. He was selected for the job by the U.S. Attorney General's Office after being suggested by another U.S. attorney.

"We will help them move to a state of government that will serve and protect the

► LARSON, PAGE 6A

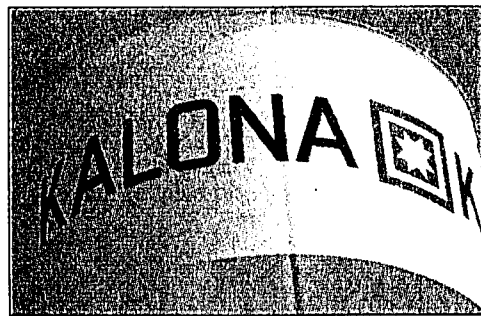


Charles Larson Sr.
U.S. attorney for Iowa's Northern District

Inside

■ Bombing kills 10, wounds 40 in Baghdad, 3A

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT



Beth Rooney/The Gazette

The quilt block design on the Kalona water tower is 8 feet tall. The City Council is considering a new paint job to give a quilt design more impact.

Not a towering success

Kalona wants to redo quilt on water tower

By Mary Ziellinski
News correspondent
KALONA — Residents and the City Council are throwing a wet blanket on the just-painted quilt now gracing Kalona's new water tower.

"You can't see the one (quilt block) on it," Larry Moeller said, voicing a sentiment shared by a number of other residents.

Many people say they'd rather see an entire quilt pattern painted on the tower.

Kalona, a Washington County city of 2,300 south of Iowa City, is known as a center of Amish life, including quilts. The town is home to the Kalona Quilt and Tex-

tile Museum and has several quilting businesses.

"Seeing a quilt on that tower would be the best advertising we have about this being Iowa's quilt capital," Moeller told the City Council earlier this week.

The council was persuaded and asked the city administrator to obtain cost estimates for repainting the tower.

"If we have to live with this for the next 25 years, I think we need to redo it," said council member Steve Reif.

The design and letters were supposed to be 16 feet high but ended up being only 8 feet high.

CONTROVERSY

HARSH WORDS

E. Iowa blacks weigh in on Cosby's criticism

By Tom Fruehling
The Gazette
The shock waves from comedian Bill Cosby's recent twin blasts of certain segments of the black community continue to reverberate.

His first shot came in May when he criticized clothing styles and poor grammar, and chastised parents for not bringing up their children properly.

Then, two weeks ago, he argued that African-Americans should stop blaming the "white man" for their problems and that black youths are the "dirty laundry" that some African-Americans don't want exposed.

Reaction from around the country has run the gamut, from those who say Cosby is merely voicing long-hidden truths to those who claim he's an out-of-touch, rich snob who has

no call to preach to the disadvantaged.

His comments have been on the minds of local black leaders, as well.

"The man is right," said

Henry Davison, 77, who moved to Cedar Rapids in 1966 and has operated the H.D. Youth Center since 1997. "He's telling it straight down the line."

Too many blacks, Davison said, "would blame somebody else rather than themselves" for their place in society.

Forced to fend for himself at the age of 14 in his native Mississippi, Davison said he learned at an early age that "you can be what you want to be, but you have to do it for yourself. You can't wait for someone to do it for you."

► COSBY, PAGE 6A



"You can be what you want to be, but you have to do it for yourself."
Henry Davison



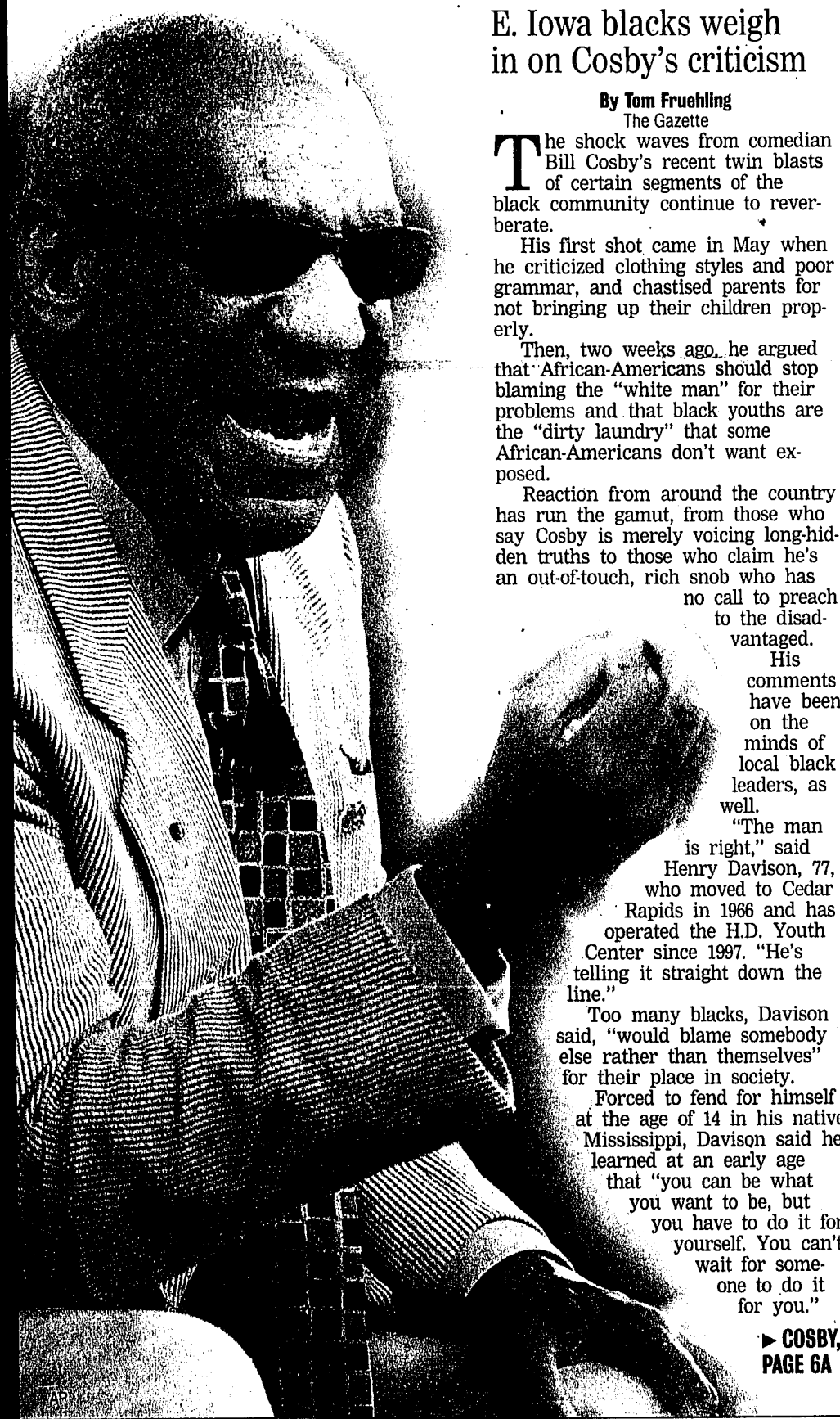
"They're examples of expression that are generational. Embrace it; don't put it down."
Slayton Thompson



"If it gets people talking about how to put a focus on trying to help more students find success, then I'm all for it."
Charlotte Westerhaus

“Let me tell you something, your dirty laundry gets out of school at 2:30 every day, it's cursing and calling each other n----- as they're walking up and down the street. They think they're hip. They can't read. They can't write. They're laughing and giggling, and they're going nowhere.”

Bill Cosby at the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition & Citizenship Education Fund's annual conference on July 1

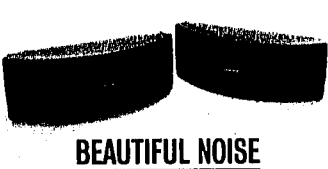


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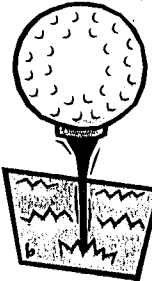
Children learn about fire safety at weeklong camp in Cedar Rapids, 7A
Pictures, 7A



BEAUTIFUL NOISE
Outdoor speakers bring on the noise, bring on the sound, Accent

TROON TIME

The British Open begins today in Troon, Scotland, Sports



THE NEW HUNK

Dweebs are dreamy as geek chic becomes the newest rage, Advice 3E



TOMORROW

Change is difficult, but status quo can be emotionally draining, Accent



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Partly cloudy

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Cosby/Comments strike chord in community

► FROM PAGE 1A

Dale Todd, 46, Cedar Rapids' first black city commissioner, said he, too, agrees with much of what Cosby has been saying.

"It may be a generational thing, but somewhere along the line it became socially acceptable, even cool, to walk down the aisle of a grocery store with a cell phone and use obscenities every other word," Todd said.

He said he grew up poor on the South Side of Chicago, "but we had a sense of what was appropriate in how we carried ourselves."

Todd, for one, is glad that Cosby has been speaking out.

"He's obviously struck a chord on things that have been out there a long time," said Todd, now a salesman for a national firm that sells playground equipment. "He has a forum and the credibility to put a focus on problems. People stand up and take notice."

Homicide/No arrest has been made

► FROM PAGE 1A

was unable to keep secretions in his stomach. Chiavetta vomited and inhaled the vomit.

Kimberly Chiavetta is a patient at St. Luke's. Robins police said no arrest has been made and declined to comment on the case.

Neighbors said Kimberly Chiavetta was taken to the hospital by ambulance late Monday night. There was speculation that the death was an assisted suicide.

Linder said Frank Chiavetta was not terminally ill.

Larson/Ashcroft says he's ideal for the job

► FROM PAGE 1A

people and move away from a dictatorship," Larson said.

Attorney General John Ashcroft called the job an "imposing task" and said Larson is "the ideal person" to do it. Ashcroft cited Larson's experience working with the Saudi Arabia government for three years and his other experience.

Larson, a retired Army Reserve colonel, has been U.S. attorney since 2001 — a job he also held from 1986 to 1993. He was Iowa's drug policy coordinator for five years, Iowa's commissioner of public safety for three years and chairman of the state's parole board for seven years.

Larson's son, Chuck Larson Jr., a state senator, has been in Iraq since February. He's an Army Reserve major and is stationed about 50 miles from where his father will be

Trial/C.R. man faced 3 charges

► FROM PAGE 1A

at the Grahman's home playing cards and watching TV. He was the last one awake before the fire roused Reed-Grahman about 11:55 p.m.

Zirtzman was charged with two counts of first-degree murder and one count of first-degree arson in June 2003 after he confessed to starting the fire.

On Wednesday, Judge David Remley read the verdict, "Not guilty on count one. Not guilty on count two. Not guilty on count three."

Zirtzman's mother, Orion Zirtzman, collapsed sobbing. Her husband held her as Pastor Doug Morris of the Toddville Free Methodist Church led the family in prayer in the back of the courtroom.

"We're very pleased with the verdict, but our hearts go out to the Grahmans. We're very mindful of their loss," defense attorney Casey Jones said.



Dale Todd
Former C.R.
City Council
member



Percy Harris
Former Linn
County medical
examiner

Without offering a personal opinion of Cosby's sometimes-scathing views, Charlotte Westerhaus said she, too, is pleased that he has launched a public discussion.

"If it gets people talking about how to put a focus on trying to help more students find success, then I'm all for it. That's a good thing," said Westerhaus, 48, director of equal opportunity and diversity at the University of Iowa.

Retired Cedar Rapids physician Percy Harris, 76, said some of the issues Cosby

brings up are age-old ones.

Back in the 1960s, he said, he and friend Vernon Smith became concerned that some children in the black community were not reading up to grade level. They formed the Cedar Rapids Negro Civic Organization to raise funds for special tutoring and to provide college scholarships.

"The problem then, as it is now, is that there just wasn't enough money," Harris said.

Slayton Thompson, 56, who has been around youths for many years as director of the Grant Wood All-City Drum Corps and as a community liaison in the Cedar Rapids school district, said he admires Cosby for jumping into a controversial fray.

Thompson said he prefers a less strident manner, though.

"I do not agree with the 'N' word or with wearing your pants below the groin area, and I don't like the words in the hip-hop music world, but I have learned that a gentle approach can turn things around.

"They're examples of expression that are generational. Embrace it; don't put it down. ... It is not how we look or talk that is so important, but how the heart is fixed on a master plan not drawn out demographically for a specific group or race."

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"He had some chronic medical illnesses, but none of his illnesses in and of themselves would be considered terminal," Linder said.

Frank Chiavetta was a retired nurse. He taught nursing at Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, and worked at Lantern Park Nursing and Rehab Center in Coralville, Heritage Nursing and Rehab Center in Cedar Rapids, and Willow Gardens Care Center in Marion. He retired from St. Luke's Hospital in January 2003.

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based in Baghdad.

Larson will retain his U.S. attorney's job and salary while in Iraq. His understanding is that he gets no additional pay for the new assignment. In his absence, Judy Whetstine, longtime assistant U.S. attorney, will become acting U.S. attorney, with no pay increase.

Larson expects to be in Iraq until the end of the year, then return home before going back to Iraq for perhaps another six months or more.

Larson's predecessor, Stephen Rapp of Cedar Falls, also ended up with a foreign assignment. He was appointed senior prosecutor with the United Nations war crimes tribunal for Rwanda. Between 500,000 and 1 million people were murdered in that African country in 1994.

■ Contact the writer: (319) 398-8255 or dick.hogan@gazettecommunications.com

Flight delays up this summer

WASHINGTON (AP) — This summer is shaping up as the worst for flight delays since 2000, when nearly one in every four planes was late.

The gloomy picture is because of the large number of people traveling — passenger loads have returned to pre-Sept. 11, 2001, levels — and a weather pattern producing severe storms in some of the nation's most congested airspace.

On Wednesday, storms delayed flights to New Jersey's Newark Liberty International Airport by more than three hours. Other airports along the East Coast — in Baltimore, Washington, Boston, New York and Philadelphia — experienced delays up to an hour.

During the summer of 2000,

severe thunderstorms coupled with large passenger loads and work slowdowns led to massive delays. While few experts expect this year's problems to be as pronounced, most agree there will be significantly more delays than the previous three summers.

"Airplanes are going to be very full, airports are going to be crowded, there are going to be long lines at security," said David Swierenga, an airline economist and president of AeroEcon.

Passengers know it already. "The planes are really jammed and service seems to be suffering," said Ken Cahill, a traveler from Asheville, N.C., passing through Reagan Washington National Airport.

Another traveler at the airport, Don Greenberg of Cin-

cinnati, said he'd seen problems from the increase in passengers and from lines at security checkpoints. "I travel every other week and sometimes three to four cities are delayed," he said.

Swierenga believes 2004 will top the record 666 million passengers in 2000.

Through May, the percentage of late-arriving flights was up 27 percent over the first five months of 2003, reversing steady improvements in on-time performance since 2000. The Transportation Department reported about one in five flights arrived 15 minutes or more behind schedule, the threshold for a flight to be considered delayed. About one-quarter of all late flights were more than an hour behind schedule.

Study: Red snapper often mislabeled

Associated Press

Scientists recommend that you think twice before spending \$15 for a red snapper filet the size of an index card. A new genetics study suggests a poor ocean cousin might be masquerading as its upscale relative on your dinner plate.

Research at the University of North Carolina shows more than three-quarters of "red snapper" samples from eight states turned out to be different species — vermillion snapper or lane snapper — in violation of federal law. Red snapper is increasingly rare

and it usually fetches a premium price compared to other reef fish.

Cheating consumers by several dollars per pound with mislabeled fish is only the beginning of the problem, scientists said.

"The remarkable extent of product mislabeling threatens to distort the status of fish stocks, contributing to a false impression that fish stocks are keeping up with demand," reports the study's senior author, Peter Marko.

Seafood industry executives said the study was too

small to be meaningful, and its results were overblown. They suspected that most of the samples simply were misidentified.

Marko's lab started the study not as genetic detective work, but basic instruction in DNA sequencing.

His team analyzed meat from 22 fish bought from nine vendors in Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina and Wisconsin. Details appear in the latest issue of the journal Nature.



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