

Sun-Sentinel

BROWARD METRO

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AP pool photo/BILL TURNBULL

Colin Ferguson rests his chin on his hand as he waits the jury's verdict on Friday. He was convicted of murdering six subway passengers.

Subway gunman found guilty in shooting spree

Sun-Sentinel wire services

MINEOLA, N.Y. — Colin Ferguson was convicted on Friday of murdering six passengers when he opened fire on a crowded commuter train, ending a trial in which he refused an insanity plea and then offered a bizarre defense as his own lawyer.

The jury deliberated for 10 hours before returning its verdict about 9:20 p.m. in a courtroom packed with survivors of the attack and families of the slain victims.

In addition to the murder counts, Ferguson was convicted of 22 counts of attempted murder, weapons possession and reckless endangerment. He was acquitted, however, of 25 counts of civil rights violations that had charged that he chose his targets based on their race.

Even Ferguson anticipated the guilty verdict; only the length of the deliberations surprised him.

"Guilty," said jury foreman Delton Dove when asked about the first murder count. He repeated it five times, once for each of the other victims shot to death aboard the train during evening rush hour on Dec. 7, 1993. Nineteen others were wounded.

Light applause greeted the first guilty verdict. Ferguson stood mute, staring at the jurors

PLEASE SEE GUNMAN / 16A

Agencies announce ticket fee

Two large travel agency networks — American Express and Carlson Wagonlit — have announced they will start charging customers for ticket writing in some cases.

Many smaller agencies are expected to follow suit.

The move represents a reversal in travel agency thinking. Since the 1960s, airlines have supported travel agencies by paying commissions on tickets.

The 10 percent fees allowed agents to offer their services to passengers for free. But no longer.

Please see story, 9B.

Desegregation plan weakened

By DANA BANKER and BILL HIRSCHMAN
Education Writer

Superintendent Frank Petruzielo has recommended that every Broward school should be at least 9 percent black, not 19 percent black as recommended by the county's Desegregation Task Force.

Petruzielo's proposal, released by Broward County school officials on

Friday, watered down the most controversial elements of the committee plan for desegregating every school.

The proposal calls for the school system to strive to bring the population of every school to between 9 and 59 percent black rather than the 19 to 49 percent figures the task force proposed.

And Petruzielo set no deadline for when the integration levels should be achieved.

The task force last month said every

Broward school should be at least 19 percent black within five years, a goal Petruzielo called laudable but impractical.

The task force wanted the community near each school to produce a customized plan for desegregating its school. Petruzielo recommended school officials come up with a districtwide plan.

Petruzielo made good on his promise not to recommend solutions that

would significantly increase forced busing.

Petruzielo's revisions of the task force recommendation will be formally presented to the School Board at a Tuesday morning conference session.

Some members of the task force said they were extremely disappointed by the superintendent's recommendations.

Please see story, 1B.



Photos/ANDREW ITKOFF

Tearful convictions

Donald Semenech, right, is consoled by his lawyer, Fred Robbins, and Alice Willis, above cries to her lawyer, Michael Dutko, on Friday after the teens both were found guilty of second-degree murder and conspiracy to commit second-degree murder in the July 1993 slaying of Bobby Kent. Semenech and Willis, from Palm Bay in Brevard County, are likely to remain locked up for 12 to 17 years under state sentencing guidelines. Both had been charged with first-degree murder and faced life in prison or the electric chair. Please see story, 1B.



Porn case tears up students

By MARJORIE LAMBERT and ARDEN MOORE
Staff Writers

When the bell rang at 9:03 a.m. Friday at Crestwood Middle School in Royal Palm Beach, guidance counselor David Ramos was standing in the front of the first-period social studies class usually taught by Richard Lee Russell Jr.

Although most students already had heard that Russell and a second teach-

Charges shock Hollywood school. 8A

er from Hollywood Central Elementary School had been arrested on child pornography charges, a few girls broke into tears as Ramos talked.

"Students were disappointed because they had one picture of Mr. Russell and this seemed to present a totally different image of him," Ramos said. "They were feeling disillusioned, disappointed and angry."

At Crestwood and at the Hollywood school where the second teacher, Robert William Greene, worked, counselors talked to classes on Friday and made themselves available for individual counseling.

At Hollywood Central, dozens of parents came to pick up their children as two Broward County sheriff's deputies and three school security officers watched. One boy ambled up to a security guard and asked, "Is this because of Mr. Greene?"

PLEASE SEE TEACHERS / 9A

Arena would put Broward on the map

By BOB LaMENDOLA and ROBIN BENEDICK
Staff Writers

Two hundred feet of ice may do what 23 miles of sand have never quite done: raise Broward County onto the list of big-league metropolitan areas.

The odds are strong that Broward will land the civic center/hockey arena that H. Wayne Huizenga needs for his Florida Panthers. Five of his six favorite sites are here.

Broward would claim its first pro team — albeit in the lesser marquee sport of hockey — and then some.

The 20,000-seat venue would let Broward bid for the National Hockey League All-Star game, some college basketball events, Olympic-style competitions, national gymnastics meets, major boxing bouts, state high school sports championships and the like.

Big-name concerts, circuses, national dog shows, figure skating, roller skating, tractor pulls, monster truck meets and political rallies could all come here.

"You could now host 99 percent of the sporting events played indoor," said Ric Green, sports director for the Broward Economic Development Council. "That makes us a player."

Some boosters take it a step further. They say the arena starts to drag Broward out of Miami's shadow.

PLEASE SEE ARENA / 10A

METER-MADE REBELLION

Man with quarters is loved by drivers, cursed by parking police.

The Associated Press

TAMPA — Chuck Stephens puts quarters in parking meters for strangers.

Businesses in historic Ybor City are paying him to do it. Customers love it. Merchants love it.

Meter maids hate it.

"He is the perfect antithesis of the meter enforcers," record shop owner Tom Roe said. "Ybor City has become a place where inane laws and regulations are overly enforced."

The pied piper of parking got his start a few weeks ago when an angry merchant received yet another \$11 ticket for an expired meter and hired Stephens to carry out an act of rebellion.

He handed Stephens \$40 in quarters and told him to drive his moped up and down 7th Avenue feeding the meters in the trendy district, which once flour-

ished with cigar factories that have now been converted to shops and restaurants.

Others soon began to take notice. "The response was great," Stephens said.

Encouraged by his initial success, Stephens, 23, decided to continue on his own and sought out eight or nine businesses, each of which paid him \$10 a week to fill meters nearby. Every time he put money in a meter that had run low or expired, he left on the windshield a piece of paper that looked like a parking ticket.

People walk up to their cars and see the words "parking ticket" in big letters. Up close, they see the small print — "a parking ticket could ruin your day!" — with an explanation of what has happened. Business cards of the sponsors are printed on the back.

Everything was going along fine until Stephens was stopped by a meter

enforcer. "She told me, 'Do you know that what you're doing is illegal?'" he said. "I told her I didn't. As far as I knew I was preventing a crime."

"She told me I was obstructing justice by preventing her from carrying out her duties," Stephens said. "She said if I continued to do it, I'd be arrested."

He checked with police and they knew of no such law. So he kept on feeding the meters.

The next week, Stephens said he was on his route when a meter enforcer stopped him again and told him state law makes putting fliers on cars illegal.

The city's parking director, Gene Bressler, confirmed that it was illegal to put fliers on people's cars, but said it was not an area for meter enforcers.

"There's really nothing we intend to do," Bressler said.

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Bulletin Board	2B	payouts.	
Deaths	6B	2-6-7-9-24	
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Stocks	11B	3	\$4.00
		4	\$28.50
		5	\$21,997.98
		Winners	47,625
			2,301
			18
SPORTS	C		
NBA	3C		
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In Broward County, call 523-5463 and enter category code 4055 for the latest headlines. For more information, see 2A.



NOTE: This article is exactly as written for the South Florida Sun-Sentinel; however, it's presentation has been modified to fit this particular arrangement.

NATION: Prosecution introduces cap, glove in O.J. trial. 3A
SPORTS: St. Thomas boys reach 5A state soccer final. 1C

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Desegregation plan weakened
The state's plan to desegregate schools is being weakened by a new law that allows parents to sue for busing. The law, which is part of a package of education reforms, gives parents the right to sue for busing if they believe their child's school is not properly desegregated. The law also allows parents to sue for busing if they believe their child's school is not properly desegregated.

Subway gunman found guilty in shooting spree
A 23-year-old man was found guilty of first-degree murder and armed robbery in the shooting of a woman on a subway train. The man, who was identified as a member of a street gang, was sentenced to life in prison. The shooting occurred on a subway train in the city of Miami.

Tearful convictions
Two teenagers were found guilty of second-degree murder and conspiracy to commit second-degree murder in the slaying of Bobby Kent. The teenagers, Donald Semenec and Alice Willis, were sentenced to 12 to 17 years in prison. The slaying occurred in July 1993 in Brevard County, Florida.

Agency announces ticket for
The state has announced a ticket for a man who was found guilty of first-degree murder and armed robbery. The man, who was identified as a member of a street gang, was sentenced to life in prison. The shooting occurred on a subway train in the city of Miami.

METER-MADE REBELLION
A man with quarters is loved by drivers, cursed by parking police. The man, who is known as "The Quarter Man," is a popular figure among drivers in the city of Miami. He is known for his habit of using quarters to pay for parking, which is a common practice in the city. However, parking police often curse him for his habit.

Porn case tears up students
A case involving a student who was found guilty of possessing child pornography has caused a rift among students. The student, who was a member of a school organization, was found guilty of possessing child pornography. The case has caused a rift among students, with some supporting the student and others condemning him.

Arena would put Broward on the map
A new arena in Broward County would put the county on the map. The arena, which is being built in the city of Fort Lauderdale, would be a major addition to the county's infrastructure. The arena would be used for a variety of events, including sports, concerts, and conventions.

LOCAL

Sun-Sentinel, Saturday, February 18, 1995 Section B

Kent verdict puts courtroom in tears

Teens found guilty of second-degree murder

By TREVOR JENSEN
Staff Writer

It took jurors 12 hours to decide the fate of two young people charged in the murder of Bobby Kent. When it was over early Friday evening and the verdict was read, the defendants and most of the jury were in tears.

Alice Willis and Donald Semenec, both 19, were found guilty of second-degree murder and conspiracy to commit second-degree murder. Both had been charged with first-degree murder and faced life in prison or the electric chair. Now the pair, from Palm Bay in Brevard County, are likely to remain locked up for 12 to 17 years under state sentencing guidelines.

Willis, depicted as a cold ringleader of the mob that beat and stabbed Kent to death in July 1993, cried fiercely upon hearing the verdict, her skin covered with red blotches, apparently from nerves.

It was a rare show of emotion — her

statement to police describing the murder was flat and straightforward, her face pale and blank through much of the trial.

That was not the real Alice Willis, said her mother.

"She's not hard at all; in fact she's too soft," Virginia Slay said, sobbing softly as she left the circuit courtroom in Fort Lauderdale.

Kent was Willis' onetime girlfriend, but prosecutor Tim Donnelly said she helped spur the killing by telling friends he mistreated her and raped her the night before the murder.

Slay said her daughter's passion for Kent never waned.

"She didn't hate Bobby Kent; she loved him," she said. "That was her problem. She loved him too much."

The jury foreman, James Gannon, of Fort Lauderdale, said the lengthy trial and deliberations, combined with facing

PLEASE SEE KENT /4B



Photos/ANDREW ITKOFF

Above: Donald Semenec's mother, Donna Ferreira, and her husband, Tony Ferreira, cry on Friday after the teen was found guilty. At left, Virginia Slay, mother of Alice Wil-

lis, who also was found guilty, cries as she leaves the court. Semenec and Willis, from Palm Bay in Brevard County, likely will remain locked up for 12 to 17 years.



Photos/ANDREW ITKOFF

Tearful convictions

Donald Semenec, right, is consoled by his lawyer, Fred Robbins, and Alice Willis, above cries to her lawyer, Michael Dutko, on Friday after the teens both were found guilty of second-degree murder and conspiracy to commit second-degree murder in the July 1993 slaying of Bobby Kent. Semenec and Willis, from Palm Bay in Brevard County, are likely to remain locked up for 12 to 17 years under state sentencing guidelines. Both had been charged with first-degree murder and faced life in prison or the electric chair. Please see story, 1B.



4B Sun-Sentinel, Saturday, February 18, 1995

KENT

FROM PAGE 1B

Two teens face 12 to 17 years in Kent slaying

the emotion of the defendants and their families, led many to cry at the end.

The deliberations themselves were relatively dry, he said. There was no question that Willis and Semenec were guilty of something, he said. Most of the discussion centered on deciphering the law on first- and second-degree murder.

"The debate was basically on the degree of involvement," Gannon said.

Juries in two other trials have convicted defendants of first-degree murder in Kent's death.

The victim's best friend, Martin Puccio, 21, was found guilty as charged in September by a jury that recommended he die in the electric chair for his crime.

Derek Kaufman, 21, brought into the murder plot because of his reputation as a tough gang leader, was convicted in November. His jury recommended a life sentence for Kaufman, of Weston in unincorporated southwest Broward.

Two other defendants pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and are testifying for the state.

Broward Circuit Judge Charles Greene has said he will not sentence anyone in the Kent case until all the trials are completed. The only defendant left is Lisa Connelly, 20, Puccio's girlfriend, whose trial is scheduled to start March 27.

Kent, of Hollywood, was lured to a remote construction site near

Weston late at night by a group of friends and acquaintances who had decided to kill him because he was cruel and bullying, prosecutor Donnelly has said.

Willis walked with Kent down to a waterway, getting him away from the others. Semenec sneaked up from behind and plunged a knife into Kent's neck, setting off a murderous frenzy. Willis ran screaming back to her car.

Kent's father was furious with the jury's decision that neither Willis nor Semenec planned to kill his son.

"The jury ignored all the facts and evidence and they focused on one thing: The defendants are young," Fred Kent said. "Well, my son was only 20."

Defense attorneys said their clients were too young to realize how serious the situation would get the night of the murder, that they never intended for Kent to be killed.

"Youth was an element that brought all these people into this tragedy," said Willis' attorney, Michael Dutko.

The defendant's parents both said their children were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

"She should have realized sooner that something was going to happen, but she was only 17," Virginia Slay said. "She was always naive."

"Donny's always been a follower, all his life," said Semenec's stepfather, Tony Ferreira. "He doesn't have a whole lot of common sense. He was scared."

Willis was smiling as she was led away in handcuffs, saying goodbye to her attorneys.

"I was upset. I kind of went into shock," Willis said of her reaction to the verdict.