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## Ex-Sheriff Admits Guilt on Stolen Property Charges

Floyd Tidwell is fined \$10,000 but won't serve prison time over guns taken from the department's property room in San Bernardino County.

By LANCE POWERS Times Staff Writer  
Floyd Tidwell, the former sheriff of San Bernardino County, pleaded guilty Monday to four felony counts of concealing stolen property as investigators said he took at least 323 guns from evidence rooms during his eight-year tenure.

During his terms, from 1983 to 1991, Tidwell would walk through evidence rooms "as if sleeping, to take his pick of weapons," one sheriff's official said. Among the weapons was a military M-2 carbine, a fully automatic assault weapon banned under state and federal gun control laws.

Under a plea agreement with the San Bernardino County district attorney's office, Tidwell will pay a \$10,000 fine and cooperate with investigators who are trying to recover the firearms. He will not serve any time in jail.

"Incarceration was never an option," said Assistant Dist. Atty. Michael Risley, 74. He did serve the people well in many respects for many years. We wanted him to acknowledge

his wrongdoing and to seek his cooperation in correcting this matter."

Under state law, confiscated firearms must be returned to their owners, noted at public auction by the county or used for approved law enforcement purposes, such as target practice, Risley said.

"What you can't do is take them," Risley said.

Tidwell stashed boxes of guns in his garage in Phelan and would give them away to family and friends, his daughter-in-law told investigators.

Tidwell accepted the plea agreement to limit the stress of a trial on his aging wife, according to his attorney, David Call.

"I was a jury member at his trial, but the result is his wife's funeral, how do I win that?"

Call said. "This was an opportunity for the sheriff to stand up and end this sorry mess."

Call said Tidwell didn't believe his handling of the guns was illegal, and that the number of guns Tidwell is accused of taking might be inaccurate.

"It used to be common practice for law enforcement officers

(See Sheriff, Page B1)



IN COURT — James Kilgore, 56, is the last of five ex-SLA members sentenced for the slaying of Myra Oswald.

## SLA Member Gets 6-Year Sentence

James Kilgore expresses remorse for his role in 1975 slaying of a woman during a bank robbery.

By ERIC BAILEY Times Staff Writer

SACRAMENTO — After a generation on the run, the final member of the radical Symbionese Liberation Army was sentenced Monday to six years in prison for the slaying of a suburban housewife during a botched bank robbery here nearly three decades ago.

remorse for the 1975 slaying of Myra Oswald, a 42-year-old mother of four killed by a shotgun blast shortly after she arrived at a bank in the nearby suburb of Carmichael totting church collections.

Kilgore fled within months of the slaying and lived under an assumed name in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Authorities caught up to him in November 2002, just a day after four of his SLA colleagues pleaded guilty to Oswald's murder.

Last week, Kilgore also was ordered to spend 4½ years in prison on federal explosives and passport fraud convictions in San Francisco.

Inside a hushed Sacramento County Superior Court room, Kilgore apologized to Oswald's family, saying he accepted full responsibility for his role in the bank robbery that led to her death. "If there is one day in my life I could live again," Kilgore said, "it would be that moment."

Oswald's family members said they were happy to see Kilgore finally brought to justice, but expressed regret that with time for good behavior he might serve as little as three years in prison for the murder.

"It's difficult to accept," said Jon Oswald, 44, one of the sons. "He's not really being punished

(See Kilgore, Page B1)

## King/Drew Given Tentative Approval

Troubled hospital may keep accreditation but must correct problems in 14 areas, officials say.

By TRACY WEBER AND CHARLES ORNSTEIN Times Staff Writers

A national hospital commission has tentatively told Martin Luther King Jr. / Drew Medical Center that it passed a needs inspection and would maintain full accreditation, Los Angeles County officials said Monday.

But the long-troubled county hospital must first fix 14 problems identified during a regular scheduled review last week.

The inspection by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, conducted every three years, is considered a national barometer of hospital quality.

County officials said the findings were particularly significant as King/Drew works to recover from a devastating series of lapses in patient care and regulatory sanctions in recent

months.

A bayside Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke said at a news conference at King/Drew on Monday that the survey results were very symbolic.

"It's certainly good to have a good news day because we had some bad news days, because we've had our share of those," said Burke, whose district includes the hospital, in Willowbrook just south of Watts. "It's time to move on."

Dr. Thomas Garthwaite, director of Health Services, called the commission's findings "an important milestone in what we believe is a profound transformation of the medical center."

Hospitals pay the joint commission to conduct its surveys. The commission has the power to strip a hospital of accreditation but rarely does so.

The group notifies hospitals of its inspection dates in advance, allowing them to prepare for reviewers. King/Drew, like many hospitals, hired consultants to help with preparations.

Marc Forstinger, a spokesman for the commission, said (See Review, Page B1)

'Homicide is not fashionable. It is not the popular cause, the cause du jour.'

Ronald Banks, Inglewood police chief and chairman of Loved Ones of Victims board



SURVIVORS: Felicia Parks, left, Madeline Enriquez and Eliza Crawford are members of Loved Ones of Victims board, a nonprofit agency in South L.A. that helps treat psychological aftermath of killings and is struggling for funds.

## Group Pins Hopes on New Name

Nonprofit agency that aids murder victims' loved ones seeks to boost fundraising by dropping the word 'homicide.'

By JILL LAVOY Times Staff Writer

Reluctantly by donors and deprived of city funds, organizers of Loved Ones of Homicide Victims made a reluctant change: They dropped "homicide" from the organization's name.

"Homicide" is not a cause that people want to align themselves with, explained the Rev. Ferrol Robins, the South Los

Angeles agency's director. "It is something no one wants to think about."

Homicide rates in the Los Angeles Police Department's South Bureau, which stretches from Watts to Crenshaw, are roughly six times the national average. Nearly half of all homicides in California occur in Los Angeles County.

The fact that a nonprofit agency specializing in treating the psychological aftermath of these killings lacks funds "really angers me," said Deputy Chief Earl Poyntner of the South Bureau.

Poyntner called the agency "unique in terms of grass-roots organizations." If it were to close, "it would not be a void. It would be an abyss."

problems are putting the squeeze on many nonprofit agencies. But organizers for Loved Ones say its problems go beyond tight budgets. They say Los Angeles' murder problem is losing out to other political priorities and more popular causes.

"Homicide is not fashionable. It is not the popular cause, the cause du jour," said Inglewood Police Chief Ronald Banks, chairman of Loved Ones' board.

For nearly two decades, Loved Ones has provided counseling and support to about 200 people a year who are grief-stricken after a homicide — mostly street murders, many of them gang-related. It serves the city's most violent neighborhoods.

(See Group, Page B1)

## Protest in Koreatown Dampens Rare Visit by N. Korean Diplomats

The U.N. delegates were invited to L.A. to accept \$20,000 to help victims of a train disaster.

By WILLIAM WEAVER Times Staff Writer

What was planned as a rare moment of goodwill — the first time in memory that North Korean diplomats had visited Los Angeles' Koreatown — disintegrated Monday when protesters sprayed the dignitaries with water, blocked their path and jeered.

The North Korean officials had come here to accept a \$20,000 donation to help survivors of a recent train explosion. Local Korean leaders said they

hoped the gesture would mark a turning point in relations between the Koreans in Los Angeles, the largest such community in the United States, and North Korea, one of the world's most isolated dictatorships.

But full well aware before the participants made it to the photo op with an oversized check.

About 100 South Korean veterans, many dressed in military fatigues from their country's civil war, blocked the diplomats' entrance to the Korean American Federation building. When the diplomats' car reached the parking lot, the 77-year-old leading the protesters lay down in its path.

"But they just went around me, they took a detour," said Chul Bong Keon Kim, president of the

Korean Veterans Assn. He said he lay down in protest because he believed that money given to North Korean officials would simply be used to fund a nuclear program or to extend Kim Jong Il's military power.

"Why did you use the money to buy food, blankets or food items and send them directly to the people who need it in North Korea?" Kim said.

Leaders in the Korean American Federation of Los Angeles had raised \$50,000 since a train disaster last month in the town of Ryongchon killed more than 180 people and injured about 1,300 others. Many of the victims were children who were blinded when they turned to look at the blast as they left an elementary school on their lunch break.

(See Protest, Page B1)



UNWELCOME: A North Korean diplomat is doused with water during a protest by South Korean veterans in L.A.'s Koreatown.

## INSIDE

### State Adds to Arsenal to Fight Wildfires

Governor increases funds to add costly fire fighters and prisoners to help prepare for another summer fire.

### Murder Conviction Court Reverses

Federal appeals court reverses the 1994 conviction of a Long Beach teenager, saying police coerced confession.

### Patt Morrison

When war is sanitized, when you hide the coffins and the legless and armless soldiers, it might be too easy to wage again.

### Gas Leak Shuts Freeway

Natural gas pipeline puncture near UC Riverside closes Pomona Freeway and prompts evacuations.

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