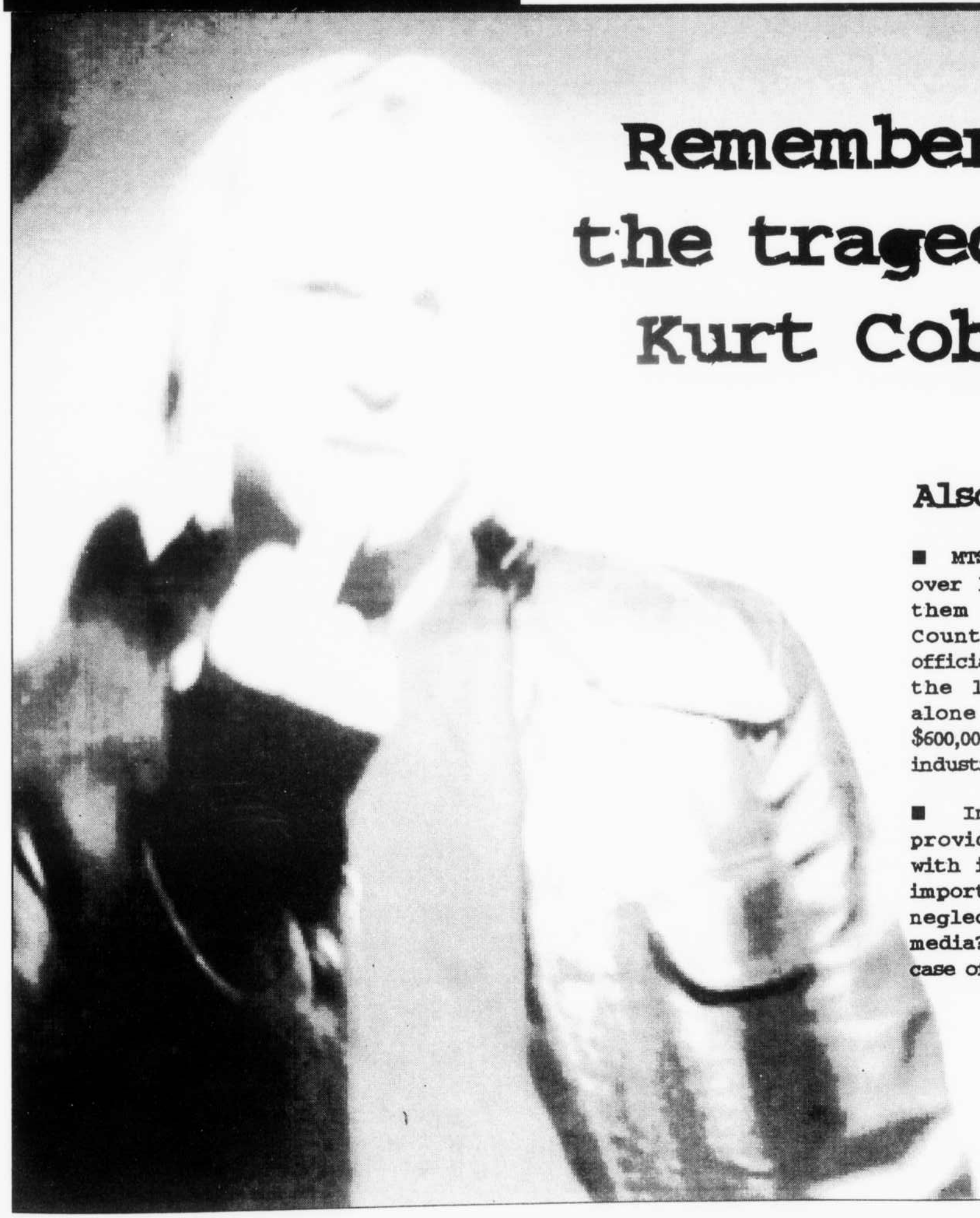
POST MODERN

A supplement to Sidelines

April 14, 1998 Volume II Issue VI



Remembering the tragedy of Kurt Cobain

Also inside:

- MTSU is in a dispute over land donated to them in Hickman County. School officials want to sell the land, the trees alone are worth $600,000 to the logging industry.

- In an effort to provide the public with instant news, are important facts being neglected by the media? A look at the case of Pamela Smart.

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MTSU officals are currently considering to sell off land in Hickman County that was donated to the university for educational purposes.

According to sources, the timber alone may be worth $600,000. However, MTSU was given the land on the premise that it would not be sold. Post Modern examines the issue and takes a look at the history of the land that now stands at the heart of the debate over what may turn into an issue of economics.

Page 6, When justice fails at the hands of the media

In the last decade, the world has become a media savy society. Post Modern examines, in depth, how coverage provided by media outlets may have had an effect on the outcome of court cases.

Post Modern's media critique focuses on the New Hampshire case of Pamela Smart. While much of the world perceives the woman as a teacher, Post Modern will prove that her job title was one of only many facts that were wrong.

Page 7, In search of Music City's best hangout bar.

If Nashville's over abundance of honky tonks are too much for you to handle, Post Modern made its own search for the best hangout in Music City. Find out who won.

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It's been four years since Kurt Cobain committed suicide. In keeping with this month's theme, columnist Keith Ryan Cartwright shares a little insight as to how the media dealt with the death of Nirvana's neurotic singer/guitarist.

Page 9, The interactive page

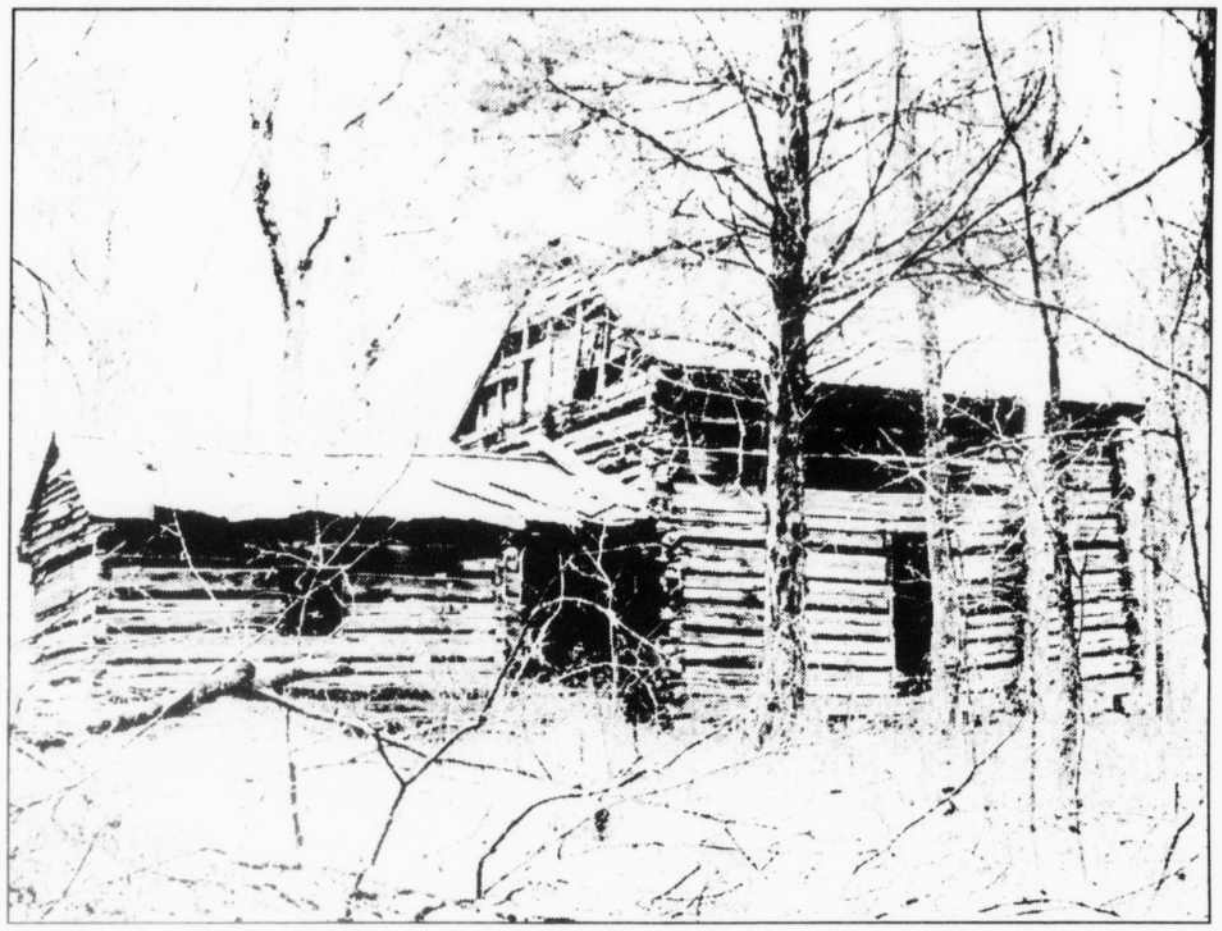
Contains a horoscope, club listing, cartoon and job training graphic.

***Sidelines* is the non-profit, editorially independent student newspaper of Middle Tennessee State University and is published every Wednesday during June and July and every Monday and Thursday during the fall and spring semesters. The opinions expressed herein are those of the individual writers and not necessarily *Sidelines* or the university.**

MTSU officials in land dispute

Donated Hickman Co. property is worth $600,000 in timber.

story & photos by Chad Gillis



Nestled quietly in the Western Highland Rim, hunkered below a jeep trail, a vast area of Hickman County wilderness sits as it has for the last century: undisturbed.

A private business, 110 miles away, waits to decide the fate of this historic, environmentally rich land. Should it be logged? Sold to a conservation agency? Or should it remain a property of MTSU's Foundation?

In 1969, Dr. Clifford Stark, then agriculture department chair, and wife, Pauline, donated the land "for the use and benefit of Middle Tennessee State University," according to the warranty deed of that same year.

Steep hills, meandering streams and some 35 species of trees make up this 995-acre tract that is worth over $600,000 in timber alone. Last year the land was transferred to the Foundation at a cost of $10.

University officials claim that the land, which was first settled in 1810, is not being used to its fullest potential.

"It is clear that (the Starks) wanted their gifts to provide financial aid for students and hands-on laboratory environments for the university's academic programs," Foundation president John Bragg explains. "We have an obligation to see that all assets acquired from the Starks will be used in a manner entirely consistent with their wishes."

The closing statement of the warranty deed describes the Starks' wishes as somewhat different: "We envision ultimately such a fine outdoor educational laboratory that other educational groups may benefit by its use, and, accordingly request that the president of Middle Tennessee State University be accorded the privilege of granting permissive use by other groups pursuant to the rules and regulations of Middle Tennessee State University."

Although the deed states that use of the land is not limited to forestry and wildlife, it says nothing of providing scholarship dollars for MTSU's Foundation.

The deed also says nothing about selling the land for logging or any other purposes.

According to the deed, this wildlife gift should be used to by students and faculty "in such a manner that the education and general welfare of mankind will benefit thereby."

Rex Barber, a biology graduate student who has spent the last three years studying the land, is taking full advantage of the gift.

"I'm trying to get an accurate description of the forest in a natural setting," Barber explains. His thesis documents vegetarian as it naturally occurs in Middle Tennessee.

"This is a mature wood," Barber says. "I can show you an Oak that's 31 inches in diameter. Mature forests exhibit a clear area with trees a distance apart — it's easy to walk through."

Woodland areas have dominant and less-dominant vegetarian. The dominant trees in this area are hardwoods, Barber says. If these trees are removed, the cedars and pines will be able to establish dominance and the area will not represent land in its natural state.

"It's a diverse wood," Barber says. His research indicates that this land was logged around 100 years ago and that it has taken this long for the area to return to its current state.

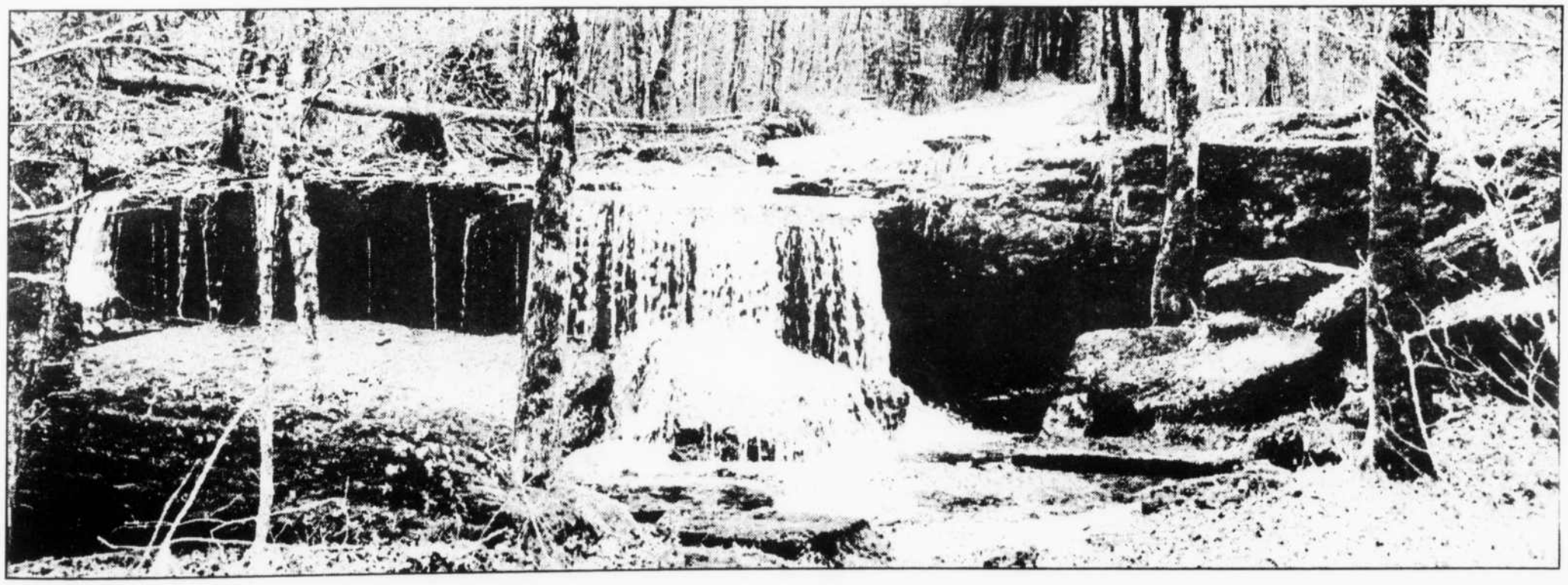
Barber is at odds with the university. He says the land would best be used as an outdoor laboratory — which is consistent with wording in the Stark deed.

Barber says the same school that fostered his love of woodland areas is also the same school that could take that woodland away from him.

Although the environmental concerns related to wildlife and logging are obvious, this land has a possible historical aspect that could prove to be equally important.

Other than Tennessee

See page 10, **HICKMAN**.



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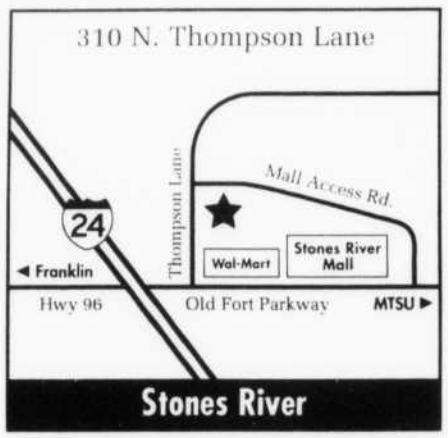

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When justice fails at the hands of the media

by Keith Ryan Cartwright

The world has grown impatient with waiting for facts.

But have the media, in an effort to feed the public's insistent appetite for breaking news, intentionally set aside some of their standards?

On the heels of the O.J. Simpson case, arguably the most publicized court case in which the outcome would have no bearing on the life of the general public, there has never been a better time to examine the media's handling of facts.

During the last 10 years, there has been a plethora of cases that have caught the attention of the national media spotlight. From Simpson to the Menendez brothers to JonBenet Ramsey to Paula Jones and the "Unabomber," the media became fixated on each of these cases, giving them far more coverage than many critics thought they deserved.

At the outset of the '90s, CNN was the only 24-hour news and information network. Now other networks such as MSNBC, CNBC and even CNN's spin-off CNN Headline News, all ferociously compete with one another to provide the most instant news available.

Much of the way the media handle their coverage can be traced back to the beginning of the decade and the New Hampshire case of Pamela Smart.

It was May 1, 1990, when Pamela's husband Gregg was murdered in the foyer of their Derry, N.H., townhouse upon returning home.

Initially, the story didn't garner much media attention. It appeared as though it was just another classic case of a resident who happened upon a robbery in progress. As far as the media were concerned, there wasn't much tell.

"It was just another news story until they linked her to being a teacher, even though she wasn't," said Tracy Collins-Paris, the first person Pamela called the night of the murder.

"She was in hysterics. She wasn't calm and quiet like she had been portrayed. When I got there, she was on the floor in a T-shirt and sweat pants in a heep of tears and sweat, crying."

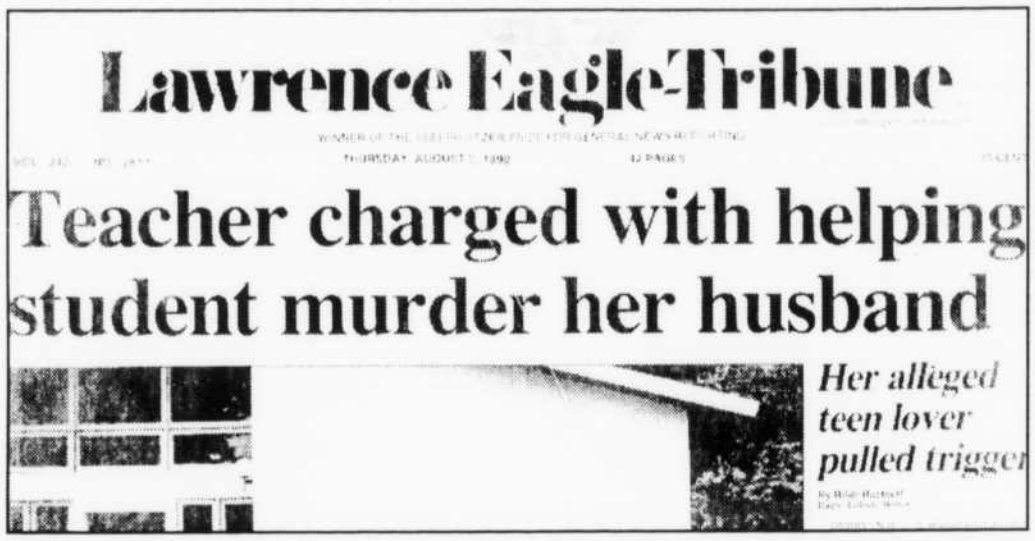
In reference to Smart's demeanor in the immediate days following the murder, the media called her everything from an "Ice Princess" to the "Madian of Metal."

A month later, three area teen-agers — William Flynn, Patrick 'Pete' Randall and Vance Lattime — were arrested in connection with the murder. Then came the story that Flynn had been romantically linked to Pamela and that she had coaxed the lovesick teen into carrying out the murder.

"It was a circus from then on out," Collins-Paris remembers. "Everybody was trying to get interviews anyway they could."

At that point, the national media had an angle to pursue and sensationalize the story, milking it for all it was worth in the war for ratings.

During the height of the coverage, WMUR-TV Channel 9, an ABC affiliate in Manchester, N.H., basked in the best ratings it had ever received. According to the station's former criminal reporter Bill Spencer, the program director ordered him to churn out stories day after day, even though no new developments had occurred.



Lawrence Eagle-Tribune

THURSDAY, AUGUST 2, 1990

Teacher charged with helping student murder her husband

Her alleged teen lover pulled trigger

The Lawrence Eagle-Tribune was one of many local media to sacrifice Pame Smart's true job title. The Tribune is published in Massachusetts, just 30 miles from Derry, N.H.

"It's a fact that on 10 or 20 ocassions I said to my boss, 'I don't have anything today,'" Spencer said. "He just said that you're doing it anyway.

"It forced me to keep digging because he was riding me. I have to give him praise for pushing me to the limit. But there were definitely times when we argued and got into fights about this thing."

Though Spencer admits much of the media's coverage was spurred onward in a quest for higher shares in the ratings. Spencor's avowed distaste for his station's handling of the story didn't stop him from putting together his own 30-minute special, "Anatomy of a Murder."

The special aired two days before the trail began and contained allegations that hadn't yet been proven in a court of law.

"I never asked anybody, 'Why did you run it at this exact time?'" Spencer said. "But I know the reason, it was in the interest of high ratings. They knew that everybody would tune in for it and that everybody's interest was peaked.

"It's a double-edged sword because everybody's interest is peaked, so they went for it. That's one side of the edge and the other is that it was just about to go to trial and we're revealing the entire case."

By summer's end, the typically quiet and quaint town of Derry found itself overexposed. Not only were the local southern New Hampshire and Boston media covering the case, but so too was every media outlet imaginable.

From the "Boston Globe" to "People" magazine to "60 Minutes," everyone was looking for their own take on the story. Unfortunately, in the fray at least a few of the facts became misconstrued.

The biggest of the blunders was the fact that Smart was consistently referred to as a teacher at Winnacunnett High School when in fact she worked there as a media center assistant.

"You had Pulitzer Prize winning journalists calling her a teacher," Spencer recalls. "And you've got the bottom of the barrel "A Current Affair" tabloid shows calling her a teacher, but that didn't surprise me. Did it surprise me that the top writer at the "Boston Globe" called her a teacher? You better believe it.

"Was I thinking in my head, should I refer to her as a teacher since everybody else in the whole world was? You better believe that crossed my mind."

Smart didn't even work in the main building of the school, which housed the classrooms. Her work was done in a smaller building across the parking lot. Not to mention, she wasn't even employed by Winnacunnett High School, she actually worked for the school district.

"In television, a lot of reporters don't want to go into all that detail because you only have a minute-thirty to do your story," explains Spencer. "You live on sound bites and a hell of a lot of details get left out."

As the story began to dominate in coverage, a number of credible and unscrupulous reporters also began prowling the area, hounding anyone who was even remotely linked to the case.

"At the time, I was a reporter with four years experience on the street and going up against reporters from Boston with 30 years experience," Spencer said.

According to Collins-Paris, who spent nearly every day with Pamela, Spencer resorted to knocking on the door and stepping off to the side so that whoever answered would have to open it up in order to see who it was. Collins-Paris also said that Spencer would often hide in the bushes outside Pamela's house and wait for her to leave. When she did, he'd ambush her in an effort to get an interview.

Many of the acclaimed media personalities covering the case also did whatever it took to get a scoop, including Stephan Sawicki, a freelance journalist for "People" magazine.

Sawicki had befriended Pamela, claiming to be working on a story that would truly tell the world Pamela's side of the incident and how the family of her deceased husband, Gregg, had been unjustly turned against her, said Collins-Paris.

But Smart's family says Sawicki betrayed them in the most deceitful way possible. Smart's parents invited Sawicki into their home and answered all his

See page 11, **JUSTICE**.

Smart wasn't a teacher after all

by Keith Ryan Cartwright

Pamela Smart has been called everything from a teacher to a murderer. She may turn out to be neither.

Smart's story remains one the most titilating of the decade.

She began to garner national attention Thursday, Aug. 2, 1990, when the "Lawrence Eagle-Tribune", a daily newspaper in southern New Hampshire, ran a two-deck banner headline reading: "Teacher charged with helping student murder her husband."

However, what seemed like a gripping tale of using a position of authority was merely an overdramatized story.

It revolved around the theory that Smart had played a part in planning the murder of her husband Gregory, who had been shot to death earlier that year on May 1.

Three teens—William Flynn, Patrick "Pete" Randall and Vance Lattime—had already confessed to the actual murder, but they insinuated they had carried out the task at the urging of Smart. And a couple of months later, another teen—Raymond Fowler—was also charged in connection with the murder.

It turns out, Fowler and Flynn had attempted to carry out the murder several days earlier but couldn't locate the townhouse, even though Flynn had been there numerous times.

The "Eagle-Tribune's" headline, however, was wrong.Smart was not a teacher. The 23-year-old graduate of the University of Florida worked in the Winnacunnet High School media center as a librarian aide.

Therefore, if Smart was not a teacher as the headline stated, Flynn, a student there, could not have been and was not her student.

Pame admits she had an affair with Flynn, but not to the charge that she cohersed the teen into killing her husband. Instead, she claims to be the desire of "puppy love" gone bad.

In a rush to provide the public with instant information the national media picked up the story as well and after hearing reports of the "teacher," they too began referring to Smart as a teacher at Winnacunnet.

On Friday, March 22, 1991, Smart was convicted of conspiracy to have her husband murdered. She was sentenced to life in prison without the possiblity of parole.

Considering the jury was not sequestered, sensational articles by the media that contained documented inaccuracies and have led to the guilty verdict of an innocent person.

In search of Music City's coolest place to hangout

by Keith Ryan Cartwright

For years Nashville has been known for its country music.

Would-be musicians from around the world regularly migrate to Music City in search of fame and fortune.

However, with thousands of college students throughout Middle Tennessee, where is the best place to hang out on Saturday night if honky tonks are cramping your style?

Winner is: The Beer Sellar

Located at 107 Church Street just around the corner from Second Street and in the basement of Hooters, The Beer Sellar is by far the best Nashville has to offer.

Its slogan, "50 beers on tap, 150 bottles and 1 bitchin' jukebox" says it all.

More then anything, the prices at The Beer Sellar fit everyone's budget. Twenty ounce drafts range in price from $1.50 to $2.50 during happy hour, Monday thru Friday from 3-7 p.m.

Thursday nights are the only nights The Beer Sellar charges a $5 cover, however patrons benefit from live music and 2-for-1 drafts all night.

The Beer Sellar also runs an all day 2-for-1 drink special on Sundays.

Yet, I must say my favorite purchase is the cheese and crackers for only $1.50. It's guaranteed to be more then one person can eat.

Aside from just the low cost of The Beer Sellar, its overall appeal is what continues to draw patrons back. The owners have done a magnificant job with the decor, which gives the bar a real "at home" feel to it.

The Beer Sellar is classy yet allows you to kick back and enjoy yourself. At a time when too many bars pretend to be something they're not, this is one bar that has a bit of character to it without being overbearing. (Grade: A)

Honorable Mention:

The Bat Bar

Call it what you want: a dump, a hole-in-the-wall or even go so far as to call it a shithole, but the bottom line is The Bat Bar kicks ass.

Never a cover and cheap beer to boot. Two big draws when it comes to college students looking to just kick back and have a good time.

Located on the trendy corner of Broadway and Second Street, The Bat Bar is anything but trendy.

Nothing fancy, just plain decor and a cooler stocked with everything you could want to drink.

On Friday and Saturday nights, The Bat Bar even plays host to a few local rock bands.

The Bat Bar is a place where you can hang with friends and just be yourself without having to worry about spilling a drink or two. (Grade: B+)

Over-rated:

Have A Nice Day Cafe

Sorry folks, the '70s scene is a passing fancy and the $7 cover charge is totally ridiculous.

Once inside there is no live music — just a DJ playing "Pulp Fiction"-esq disco that even John Travolta and Quinton Tarintino would cringe at.

The prudy egos and overpriced beer make for an 'I wish I was someplace else' feel.

The character of the bar is fake; more so, it's the epitome of wanna-be.

It seems everyone in the place feels like they're living inside the movie "Swingers." Problem is, not a single one of them comes close to being another Vince Vaughn.

Bottom line, Have A Nice Day Cafe is far from being unique. (Grade: F)

Vickie Gibson/staff

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The little known tragedy of Kurt Cobain

Keith Ryan Cartwright

It's hard believe that four years have already gone by since we lost Kurt Cobain.

The victim of an overbearing society and his own insecurities, Cobain resorted to taking his life April 8, 1994.

Considering the media-savy world in which we live these days, there's not much in regard to Cobain, Nirvana and the Seattle grung scene that we haven't already heard.

But people often lose sight of just what it was that forced Cobain into such a neurotic state of mind — media manipulation.

Even in death, Cobain wasn't free from the tightly-clenched grip the media had on his every move.

When a local repairman arrived at Cobain's house late that morning and found the Nirvana singer/guitarist dead of a single gunshot wound, he didn't initially call 911. Instead, the man called a local radio station.

How repulsive to think that anyone could stumble upon a dead body and their first intuitive act is to call a disc jockey.

Not unbelievable, just hard to fathom such an atrocious act can take place.

But that's precisely the type of hypocrisy Cobain had been subjected to ever since Nirvana's album "Nevermind" exploded up the Billboard charts in 1991.

Nonetheless, there's a little told story in regard to Cobain's death which may help to shed some light on the subject of just how intrusive the media had become.

At the New York office of Geffen Records, April 8 seemed to be going along like any other typical day.

Around 1 p.m. Nirvana publicist Dennis Dennehy and another Geffen publicist left to go grab some lunch at a Manhatten deli, just a few blocks away.

They had no idea that at precisely the same time, news of Cobain's death was being broadcast by a Seattle radio station.

Not even an hour later, they were returning to their Geffen office when they noticed a flurry of reporters in front of the building as they approached.

These weren't your typical music critics, so they had no idea who the two publicists were when they walked up to the scene.

Given the publicists are a couple of inquisitive guys, they naturally asked one of the cameramen what was going on.

One could only imagine how they must have initially felt to hear that the chaos was all in an effort to confirm the suicide of Kurt Cobain.

A year later, Dennehy looked back at the situation and said that after the shock wore off the two were so inundated with calls they worked all through the night.

It seems he only paused long enough to take a short nap on a sofa in the office, before Dennehy finally went home around 3 a.m. the following night.

Dennehy recalled the story with a genuinely sincere look of sadness that's hard to forget.

Geffen Records publicity photo

Kurt Cobain (center) shows his true feelings towards the media in a 1991 publicity photo for Nirvana's ground breaking album "Nevermind." Three years later, he commited suicide in Seattle.

And after a brief pause, he said, "I never want to go through something like that again."

Hopefully he won't.

The story just goes to show how instantaneous news has gotten over the years.

And Cobain became just another causualty of the media.

As the years go by, hopefully, his death will not have been in vain.

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Horoscopes

Aries (March 21-April 19)
Don't get pushed into doing something you'll regret. It was fun while it lasted.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)
Back your partner against tough odds. Your support means a lot.

Gemini (May 21-June 21)
Hide out and get the work done. You won't have time to talk to anyone.

Cancer (June 22-July 22)
Follow a hunch instead of a friend's advice. You'll have to work later.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)
A roommate's stubbornness may drive you from home. You'll be back again and happier. Allow extra time.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
You'll retain just about everything you learn, so concentrate on studies then, even if it takes a heroic effort.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)
Take on extra work. It'll befun, and you can use the money.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)
You may not be able to overpower your favorite adversary, but you can sure put up a good fight. And you may get a couple of good points across.

Sagitarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Be decisive, and get rid of a bunch of stuff you don't need anymore.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Have friends over to your place. It'll help you relax after a tough day.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb 18)
Figure out what a stern taskmaster wants without being told again, and you'll pass the big test.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)
Ask someone far away for the money you need. You're getting smarter and stronger then, too.

Parking Authority Meter Notice

At the beginning of the Spring semester, meters were placed along First Street in front of the Cope Administration Building in order to accomodate persons who were conducting short-term business.

Upon further review, the Parking Authority has determined that some of these spaces should be used as white permit parking during the non-peak times. Therefore, beginning on April 13, blue tags will be placed over some of the meters on First Street, designating them as white permit parking.

When the bags are over the meters, those who are entitled to park in white permit spaces may utilize these spaces. However, when the bags are removed, these spaces once again will be considered metered parking to accomodate students during times of peak activity sucha s registration.

The Parking Authority believes that by making these spaces available for either white permit parking or as metered spaces at certain times of the year, this procedure will better serve the MTSU community

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The Boro 1211 GREENLAND DR. 895-4800
Bunganut Pig 1602 W. NORTHFIELD 893-7860
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LAND

Continued from page 3.

Valley Authority power lines, the only man-made structures inhabiting the land are two rustic log cabins and a small concrete bridge.

Surrounding both cabins are areas of cedar trees. Cedars are quick-growing trees and are not common elsewhere on the land. Barber believes these areas once held gardens that have grown over since.

Ed Johnson, of the Center for Historic Preservation, estimates that the older of the two cabins was probably built in the early to mid 1800s.

The Center has received no information on the land from the university. Johnson was completely unaware of the log structures. But for the Center to work on preserving the land from a historical prospective, the university would have to make a request.

"Work gets assigned on a priority basis," Johnson explains, "with a number of public service projects."

Historically, the land can be traced to its original settlement. It is also thought to have been a stop-over point for the underground railroad.

William Whitson purchased what is now known as Whitson Bend in 1830, according to an article by former county historian Edward Dotson. William Whitson Jr. and his brother Thomas gained possession of the land after the death of their father.

William married and had eight childre, one being Pauline Whitson, who married Clifford Stark.

Shortly after the Civil War, the Whitson family sold off several tracts of land and gave small areas to former slaves.

Somewhere between 1810 and the mid 1900s, the two log cabins were constructed — the older of which could have served as a stop-off point for the famous underground railroad.

This land is thought to have once been the home of Mary Field, an ex-slave who "developed into a free-spirited, self-reliant, gun totin' woman who could easily whip any man her size and did, on more than one occasion," according to an 1891 article in a Montana magazine. Field is believed to have been a conductor for the railroad and may have used the older cabin for housing purposes.

Bragg says a committee has been formed to study the land. The group is going work over the summer and give its evaluation to the Foundation later this year.

Though the historical aspect may be of an educational concern, the Center for Historic Preservation can do little at the time.

"Since it's university property, the university bureaucracy will have to make the ultimate decision," Johnson explains.

Though it is unclear what the future use of this land may

be, the wishes of its former owners are concrete.

"We, Clifford Nicks Stark and wife, Pauline Whitson Stark, have dedicated our entire lives to the field of education," the deed states, "and it is our desire that the tracts herein conveyed be utilized in the field of education as a means of perpetuating our efforts."

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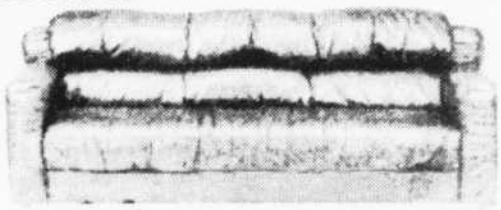

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JUSTICE

questions truthfully. But they say, he twisted their words in a book entitled 'Teach Me To Kill; The Shocking True Story of Pamela Smart — The Schoolteacher Who Gave Lessons in Love...And Murder!'"

"He turned around and did exactly what everybody had done and sensationalized it because the truth isn't nearly as exciting as what they could allege or make up," Collins-Paris said.

Smart's family and close friends say even talk show host Phil Donahue sandbagged them in an episode that aired after Smart's conviction.

Donahue had already taped an episode focusing on the family of Gregg Smart the prior week and had agreed to allow Pamela's supporters to tell their side of the story.

But once the show began, Donahue spent nearly 30 minutes recapping the previous show. He referred to Collins-Paris as Pamela's high school friend despite the fact that Collins-Paris is four years younger than Pamela and the two didn't even attend the same high school.

"He kind of turned it into the same circus that everyone had turned it into," Collins-Paris said. "He wasn't interested in anything we had to say.

"The show ended with me saying, 'Can I just say one thing? Can I please just say one thing?' He just plowed right past me, then he came up to me and said, 'OK, shows over, the camera's off.'"

Then there's Spencer, who covered the case for nearly a year. In his interview for this article he portrayed himself as man with a conscience, saying, "I feel bad for Pame, her family, her friends, and I feel bad for Gregg's parents, and their friends who have all been put through this living hell because of their association. Even with the conviction nobody won in this case. The town of Derry surely didn't benefit from all this."

However, according to Collins-Paris, on more than one occasion Spencer, who was single at the time, suggested to Pamela that when the trial was over the two might get together for a drink.

Though Pamela never reciprocated the offer in return, Spencer apparently hinted at the possibility of getting together right up to Smart's life sentence without parole.

"He's a dog. He had no class," Collins-Paris said. "He called her at home all the time under the pretense that 'of course I believe in you and I'm pulling for you.' Yet, his motive was to get his foot in the door, build up trust and then tear her down."

Whether the accusations against Spencer are true, it is true that the news anchor sold his information, as did many other key players in the case, to a Hollywood movie producer.

Spencer ended up portraying himself in the made-for-TV movie "Murder in New Hampshire, The Pamela Smart Story" starring a relatively unknown Helen Hunt as Pamela.

Gregg Smart's parents received a reported $140,000 from the same producer, Once Upon A Time Films, for their side of the story. Even the families of the convicted teen-agers sold their rights.

But it was Cecilia Pierce, the prosecution's star witness, who first struck a deal with the movie's producers even before agreeing to wear a wire tap in an effort to record an incriminating conversation between her and Pamela.

Though Pierce claims to have done the right thing she sold her story to the film's makers for a reported $100,000 on the premise that she would be the key prosecuting witness. In addition, Pierce's mother admitted that her daughter received another $1,000 from "Hard Copy" and $300 from "A Current Affair."

In the end, only Pamela's parents and a handful of her true friends, including Collins-Paris, turned down the opportunity to put a price tag on their relationship with Pamela. Brian Washburn, a friend of Pamela's, went so far as to contact a lawyer in regard to nixing the movie.

Putting aside all the Hollywood deal making, the very people prosecuting this case — Paul Maggiotto and Diane Nicolosi — had been under heavy scrutiny for having failed to convict in previous cases that seemed all but locked-up.

In addition, Judge Douglas Gray was fastly approaching an election year, and with the national spotlight sharply focused on the small town, the New Hampshire judicial system was not about to let another case, especially one of this magnitude, slip through the cracks.

"There were a lot of factors that played into the sentencing," Spencer said. "But, I don't know what they all are.

"I do know that the Attorney General's Office, the prosecutors, had a string of losses. They had a few cases that fell apart in which they lost and they probably should have won.

"And here was the mother of all murder cases, and they weren't going to let this one get away from them. They were going to go for the jugular."

Never before in New Hampshire had someone who was convicted as a conspirator in a murder case been given such a harsh sentence until March 22, 1991, when Judge Gray sentenced Pamela to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Flynn, who admitted to pulling the trigger, received 28 years, while Randall and Lattime each got 18 years.

After calling an end to the trial and hitting his gavel for the last time in the case, Judge Gray, while still sitting at his bench, was quoted as saying, "Now that it's over, I just hope Clint Eastwood plays me in the movie."

"Any chance she had for an appeal had to be before the same judge," Collins-Paris said. "Do you think he's going to admit he did anything wrong? That the jury should have been sequestered? That he shouldn't have allowed the media in? There should have been a change in venue? Those were all issues that were denied."

Also denied have been several attempts for an appeal. To no avail Pamela's original attorneys — Paul Twomey and Mark Sisti — have both been replaced. And for no apparent reason, Pamela was unexpectedly transferred from a New Hampshire federal prision to the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility just 30 miles outside of New York City, where she is the only woman there serving time without the chance of parole.

Almost a decade later, residents of the small southeast New Hampshire town are still stinging from a murder, its trial and the exposure it received, that will forever haunt them.

"Friends were split about 50-50," Collins-Paris said. "It really put a big division between the two families and pretty much the whole town, because everybody had an opinion. Friendships ended, and relationships ended. It got very nasty."

Aside from one dead, five people remain behind bars, and nearly everyone involved with the case has since moved in an effort to escape the tumultuous past. But the memories of a town torn apart remain as vivid as if it were yesterday.

"They weren't ready for the attention but they invited it once it began," Collins-Paris said. "Pame was like O.J. Simpson years before his trial. She had the same type of notority. There was that much coverage.

"It spurred so much media attention, and I don't think [the townsfolk] were prepared. But they did nothing to prevent it. I think they really hurt her right to a fair trial. I don't know how any of them sleep at night, when you know in your heart they screwed up."

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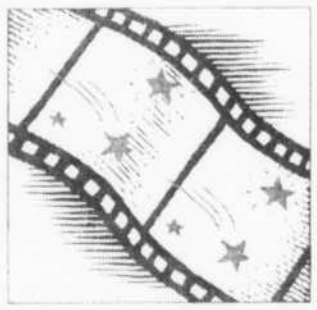

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