The Destiny Of 500

By Edward M. Byrd
Member, Illinois Bar

More than five hundred men and women will be watching the clock tick away their last moments if the Supreme Court should say that they must die. The fact is that for every man, each tick of the clock brings him one second nearer to the moment when his candle will burn itself out and he will become a prisoner of the eternal darkness.

But for these five hundred or more, waiting in the death row, each second will be shorter and each minute will have less than sixty seconds.

How many of them will die because they are guilty? How many will pay the price, not for the commission of a crime, but because of the curse of poverty, denying them access to competent representation?

How many, because of the stigma of racial prejudice where color is obvious or a name is an identity?

How many because of perjured testimony or mistaken identification? Who has the right answers, who knows? Those who inhale the odor of the lethal gas, those who writhe from the shock of the fatal current or those who strangle from the death hold of the hangman's noose - they and only they know the answer. And when the price is paid for a reason other than the commission of the crime who is there to correct the error?

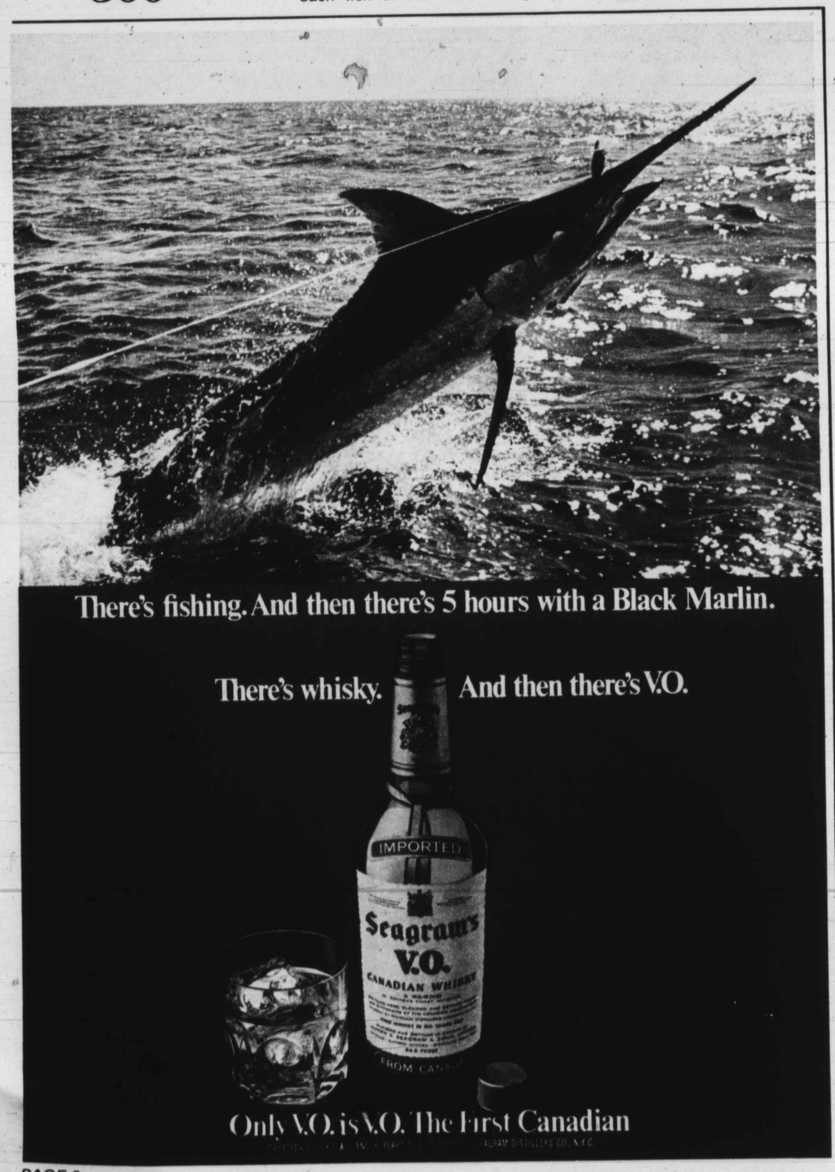
The framers of our constitution looking forward to and beyond the American Bicentennial provided against "cruel and unusual punishment."

They did not want a new colony - a new nation - to revert to the age when death was the penalty for the simple offense of theft. Such vindictive punishment for so simple an offense was an item in the motivation that sent Pilgrims to Plymouth and Colonists to Jamestown.

The claim that the death penalty is a crime deterrent finds an answer in the ever increase in crimes of violence. It reasserts factually the oft repeated statement that one man does not learn from another man's experience.

It is the duty of the Supreme Court, the nation's most respected tribunal, to do, not what is permissable but rather to hand down a landmark decision that will reaffirm the duty of a democracy to punish but also of a Christian nation to preserve.

If the decision should say to five hundred people you must die America with bowed heads will view the remains of what was once five hundred living souls, waiting for the cover of the dust from which they came, with their faces paled in death gazing upwards through eyes that cannot see and with hands chilled with the dews of eternity making the sign of the cross upon bosoms that have been stilled.



Women Moving Up In The Media

By Jim Mantell

DAWN Series

This is the first of a series of articles about "Black Women in the Media," in which we explore the opportunities, achievements and problems of the distaff professionals in America's fastest growing industry.

As the nation turns its attention to the coming presidential race and continues its eye on the economy, Americans are also noticing that the people advertising, writing, reporting and being involved in today's happenings are a new breed of young black women.

These women in media hold jobs on newspapers, at television and radio stations, in advertising offices, on corporation staffs, magazines, wire services, publishing groups, press relations, community services and dozens of other specialized areas. Ten years ago, this group was only beginning to emerge from other more traditional careers.

What makes these women so special is their high degree of intelligence, training and determination to make it to the top of their profession. It wasn't always possible to get this far.

Black women have always worked and have always brought more than adequate training to their jobs. Except for reporting and management jobs within the black press, however, most of the job titles young women hold today were not open to them in the past. That situation is not as good as it could be, but it is changing. That is what this article is all about.

The staff of *DAWN* scoured the nation for representative women in many such communications areas. We wanted to know what their backgrounds were, how they got their jobs, and what advice they might have for our readers who are interested in the world of media.

Mary Richardson Brown, our cover subject, has been called "the multi-media woman." She has worked in television, newspapers, public relations and advertising. She is a former reporter with the Baltimore AFRO-AMERICAN Newspaper and wrote and starred in a short documentary film on rape. She has produced television news clips and award-winning commercials.

Mary is currently program manager for IBM's corporate print advertising campaign. As program manager, she is responsible for coordinating the selection, photography and writing of "IBM Reports" which appears in national magazines.

At 32, Mary has decided that there are several keys to success: 1) believe in yourself at all times; 2) work hard at your job; 3) help others learn the business; and 4) thank the people who have helped you get ahead.

"I know that I have always wanted to be in communications. It has been an asset to have found my goal early in life. Women are often encouraged to be jack-of-all-trades while men have been single-minded about getting into the field they wanted. Men are further helped by a wife at home who raises the children and is supportive of the husband's career. While I see nothing wrong in that, it has left women far behind in the understanding that early planning and single-minded determination are needed to get the jobs one wants," she said.

"I was editor of a neighborhood newspaper when I was ten. I worked on the student paper wherever I went to school and there has always been a private writing project ongoing in addition to my job. The best way to get things done is to do everything at once," Mary commented.

She is a graduate of Morgan State College (political science) and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism (broadcasting).

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Mary Richardson Brown, the "multi-media woman," on the job at IBM.