

4 STAR ★ ★ ★ ★ FINAL

DAILY NEWS

40¢

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Friday, April 29, 1994

QUEENS
EDITION

OUTRAGE



AP

**WHITES ATTACK
DAILY NEWS
REPORTER IN
SOUTH AFRICA**



The first punch landed on my neck. Another kicked me on the left hip. I stretched out my arms to ward off the blows as arms from everywhere grabbed at and punched me.

MICHAEL O. ALLEN

COMPLETE COVERAGE BEGINS ON PAGES 4 & 5

MEETING HATRED

Black Daily News reporter is attacked as he covers rally

By MICHAEL O. ALLEN

Daily News Staff Writer

RUSTENBURG, South Africa — I was not afraid. I wanted to see them as they attacked me.

"Kaffir, you have to leave; you are not wanted here," one said.

"Kaffir" is South Africa's ugliest racial epithet, like its U.S. equivalent, "nigger."

"Wait a minute, you invited us," I said.

The first punch landed on

my neck. Then a kick on the left hip. One man grabbed me in a stranglehold. I wriggled free and stretched out my arms to ward off the blows as arms from everywhere grabbed and punched me and people yelled words at me in Afrikaans.

I just thought, "Wow, what the hell is going on here?" I was angry as hell, but I was not afraid. I thought, "How could these people be so undisciplined, how could they be this stupid?"

I never considered the possibility of not getting out alive.

My first instinct was to fight back, but that would make me a participant, and I didn't want to be that.

I was thinking that I came here to cover a story and I was worried that I wouldn't be able to stay to do my job.

Then a short, middle-aged woman with reddish hair, came up, punched me in the nose and drew blood.

One man, the voice of reason

son in this mad horde, told me as I was being thrown out of the gate: "Leave, you don't want to get killed here."

I knew coming here that the story of South Africa is mostly about fear and hate. I just never thought I would be drawn into the story.

My colleague Gene Mustain and I have covered the bombings, all the murders that have led up to this historic election. This was just another story to cover.

As a news gatherer, I never



bargained on becoming a newsmaker.

Yesterday, I was dragged across the line.

I went to a rally of the Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging

Not all press welcome, no matter what the sign said

By GENE MUSTAIN

Daily News Staff Writer

RUSTENBURG, South Africa — The first whiff of the hate in store came when we turned off the two-lane blacktop onto a dusty rutted road and a group of Boer commandos by a parked car glared at us.

One of them, a huge pot-bellied man with a bushy mustache and a pistol in his waistband, shouted some insult we couldn't hear.

"They think black people are the devil," said Michele Baird, our black interpreter.

Michele was in the back seat with her sister, Rowena, our interpreter on other days, who had decided at the last minute to accompany us to a press conference called by the Afrikaner Resistance Movement, a neo-Nazi paramilitary group linked to bombings that have killed 21 people in recent days.

"All press welcome," the press announcement had lied.

Up ahead, we saw several more Boers, dressed in camouflage gear and armed with automatic rifles and shotguns. Several other Boers were in a car behind us, and one leaned out a window, waving a flag with a swastika-like symbol.

We knew a South African Army armored car was at the beginning of the convoy of Boer and media vehicles into which we had fallen. We felt uneasy, but safe.

The road narrowed into one lane by a yellow stone house, the former home of Paul Kruger, an Afrikaner hero. This was to be the backdrop for an announcement by the resistance movement — known here by its Afrikaner-language initials of AWB — that the nation was headed toward "revolution and war."

The atmosphere turned poisonous soon as we parked and left the car. "Go home," a Boer woman with a pistol in her waistband said.



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY NEWS VIA AP

DAILY NEWS REPORTERS Gene Mustain (2d l.) and Michael O. Allen (right) with interpreters Michele Baird (l.) and sister, Rowena.

"Kaffir," meaning "nigger," snarled a Boer boy with her.

"I think we should stay in the car, madam," Michele said to her sister Rowena.

My friend Michael Allen and I argued against it. The place where the AWB leader, Eugene Terre-Blanche, was to speak was 50 yards away. We didn't want to leave our interpreters alone in the car.

We moved up a hill with a crowd of maybe 150 reporters and photographers. We saw one other black person and one Asian. Some reporters looked at us and shook their heads. But it was too late to think about whether it was wise to be here.

"All press welcome," the announcement had said.

Michael and I took off some of our press credentials and gave them to Michele and Rowena. I gave Rowena

my reporter's notebook and Michele my telephone diary. "You are reporters now; start taking notes," I said.

"I don't like this, madam," Rowena said to Michele.

We looked around and saw that the South African Army was now nowhere in sight. We found out later they had taken positions in trees several hundred yards away.

Michael moved into a group of reporters at the front. I stayed back with Michele and Rowena. Rowena wrote in my notebook that she was "x-tremely petrified... this is the pits."

I saw some commotion in the crowd of reporters pressed toward the front. Only later, because Michael had his tape recorder running, did we learn the ugly words that the man who was to introduce Terre-Blanche had directed Michael's way.

"There is something terribly ugly

behind you," the man had said to a Boer standing in front of Michael. "Don't get a fright when you look over your shoulder."

We did not know that Michael was in the center of the commotion that now wound back down the hill, only that several Boers were shoving television cameramen.

A white female reporter said we ought to leave. "It is getting very dangerous here," she said.

"Please take my hand," Rowena said to her.

"Wait until whatever that is down there is over," I said.

For the amount of time it took for six Boers to punch, kick and smash Michael with a nightstick, we waited, then we walked down the hill — the woman reporter and Rowena in front, me and Michele in back.

"Yeah, kaffir, hold the missus'

IN SOUTH AFRICA

— AWB for short — the white-right wing group that has been terrorizing this nation's hopeful season.

Nothing in my experience here so far prepared me for my encounter with the Afrikaner Resistance Movement.

I am aware of the group's rabid hatred of blacks and reporters. I knew that three months ago they chased a black reporter out of one of their rallies.

However, I received a message on my pager two days ago that told me of yesterday's rally. "All press welcomed," the message concluded.

It didn't say "White reporters only."

No sooner did I arrive with Gene and our two black interpreters than I heard something said to me in Afrikaans.

"I'm giving you instruction to go tell Mandela and de Klerk to go f--- themselves," he said to me. "OK? OK?"

"What does this kaffir want here?" one member of the group said to me.

Not knowing what he was saying at the time, I ignored him. A few minutes later, a man with a bullhorn called to his pal "Dominick."

"There is something terribly ugly behind you," he warned Dominick, referring to me. "Don't get a fright when you look over your shoulder."

I stood up front, among other reporters. Print photographers were crouched in front of me and television camera operators lined up behind me.

I noticed a man to my left in street-clothes with a gun around his waist. He seemed agitated by my presence and was talking to one of his uniformed friends. He gestured frantically in my direction.

I noticed suddenly that the TV cameras were no longer behind me.

In their place were about six men. They had on brown camouflage uniforms and black masks. They were also holding automatic rifles and shotguns. The world seemed such a small place all of a sudden. I cast wary glances about me.

It was then that they attacked with fists, knees and a nightstick and ejected me from their rally.

Maybe I should have expected something like this to happen, but it honestly never entered my mind.

Race was never an issue for me during the first half of my life. I was born in a fishing village in Accra, Ghana, and grew up in Lagos, Nigeria's mean streets.

When in the second half of my life, spent in the U.S., my race became an issue, I decided to ignore it and live simply as a person, as a human being.

But in South Africa yesterday, I found it difficult to ignore my race. My attackers found it impossible.



DAILY NEWS' Michael Allen (back to camera) meets hatred in Rustenburg, South Africa, yesterday.

DAILY NEWS

• Friday, April 29, 1994

U.S. rips assault at rally

BY JERE HESTER

Daily News Staff Writer

A band of South African neo-Nazis attacked a Daily News reporter at a hate rally outside Johannesburg yesterday, hitting him with fists, clubs and racial epithets.

Reporter Michael O. Allen, who is covering the historic all-race election, was bloodied but not seriously hurt after being set upon by thugs from the white Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB) near Rustenburg.

The U.S. State Department quickly condemned the unprovoked attack.

"The freedom of the press to cover South Africa political events is crucial to the democratic process, and the United States deplores any action which inhibits that freedom," said State Dept. spokeswoman Christine Shelley.

Allen was one of many reporters invited to the rally at the former home of 19th Century Boer strongman Paul Kruger — a virtual shrine to the white secessionists, many of whom were clad in fatigues and carried AK-47 semi-automatic rifles.

After an army escort for the press left, members of the right-wing white state group began hurling racial slurs at Al-

len, who is black.

The reporter was kicked, punched and clubbed in the back with a night stick. One middle-aged white woman slugged him in the face, bloodying his nose.

Allen, fellow News reporter Gene Mustain, and their two black South African interpreters managed to get to their car and sped away along a dirt road. Police denied them an escort.

Allen was later taken to a doctor who gave him an injection, but pronounced him otherwise fine.

"I'm more angry than anything," said Allen.

Polls to remain open

38

REUTER

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa's historic all-race election was extended yesterday by one day in six areas where blacks have been frustrated by ballot problems that prevented them from voting.

As the three-day vote ended in most of the country, the electoral commission said the logistical problems caused by a huge turnout

meant the vote would not be "free and fair" in the Zulu heartland and five other former black homelands.

African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela, expected to become the country's first black president, and Zulu leader Mangosuthu

Buthelezi, his main rival for the huge new black vote, both called for the extension and President F.W. de Klerk agreed.

The extension would mean the counting of an eligible 22.7 million voters for a 400-seat national assembly and

nine provincial legislatures would not start until Saturday, a day later than planned, said commission head Johann Kriegler.

The biggest single party will choose the new president, and if any party gets more than two-thirds it will be able to override all others in decision-making.

Pre-election polls predicted the ANC would win between 53% and 70%. Initial estimates of an 80% turnout could mean a majority for the ANC above the 67% threshold.

Opposition groups, particularly de Klerk's National Party and the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party, have pleaded to voters for a strong mandate to curb ANC power.

ASSAULT FROM PAGE FOUR

hand," some Boer women taunted.

We came upon Michael with his shirttail out and blood on the bridge of his nose.

After he said he was okay and the woman reporter took the sisters to our car, I went back up the hill.

As I did, a Boer told the

only other black face in the crowd — a photographer from Detroit — and an Asian woman reporter to stand back or face the same treatment "the kaffir got."

Down the hill, I said to one of the policemen, "We don't feel safe here. Please escort us out of here."

"You can just follow the

road that way," one of them said, pointing down the narrow road, "and it will lead you to the highway."

"We would really appreciate an escort."

"If you leave now, you will be safe," the cop's partner said.

"Let's get the hell out of here," I said, and we did.



ENTHUSIASTIC FARM WORKERS are taken to poll outside Ventersdorp, South Africa, deep in right-wing territory, Wednesday.