

Florida. "If this sounds wrong to you, that's because it is fundamentally wrong."

Kerry appealed for support from Jewish voters in Florida, which has the fifth-highest percentage of Jewish population in the United States. The state also determined the outcome of the 2000 election.

## Judge dismisses Utah monument suit

SALT LAKE CITY - A federal judge on Monday affirmed President Clinton's establishment in 1996 of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, a vast expanse in southern Utah nearly the size of Delaware and Rhode Island combined.

The judge dismissed a 1997 lawsuit brought by Utah counties that claimed the president had overstepped his powers by using a 90-year-old law to create the monument.

Clinton's decision to designate 1.7 million acres of canyons, cliffs and plateaus as a monument angered Utah politicians, who said the action was unconstitutional. They argued that he used the 1906 Antiquities Act as a subterfuge to create wilderness - something they said only Congress could do.

The law gives the president authority to create national monuments. Clinton's use of the law was its first in more than two decades. On monument lands, grazing, mining, logging and similar activities can be prohibited.

## Man charged in 12 strangling deaths

KANSAS CITY, MO. - An employee at a trash-hauling company has been charged with strangling 12 women or girls in an arrest authorities said was made possible by new DNA technology.

Authorities said Lorenzo J. Gilyard, 53, preyed on prostitutes and teenage girls from 1977 to 1993, sexually assaulting all but one of the victims and strangling them with items including nylon stockings, shoe strings and wire.

The bodies - most of them nude or partly clothed - turned up in various places around Kansas City over the years - an abandoned van, a field, a parking lot, a snow drift.

From News wire reports

many records.

At the heart of most questions is the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, which responded to the massacre and led the official investigation. Its track record is

five months before the rampage, the two stalk through Columbine itself, offering hit man services to classmates tired of being bullied.

Harris and Klebold were ar-

# Study says thousands in prison are innocent

## Belief based on people convicted of murder or rape, then exonerated

BY ADAM LIPTAK  
*The New York Times*

A comprehensive study of 328 criminal cases over the last 15 years in which the convicted person was exonerated suggests that there are thousands of innocent people in prison today.

Almost all of the exonerations were in murder and rape cases, and that implies, according to the study, that many innocent people have been convicted of less serious crimes. But the study says they benefited from neither the intense scrutiny that murder cases tend to receive nor from the DNA evidence that can categorically establish the innocence of people convicted of rape.

Prosecutors, however, have questioned some of the methodology used in the study, which was prepared at the University of Michigan and supervised by a law professor there, Samuel R. Gross. They say that the number of exonerations is quite small when compared with the number of convictions during the 15-year period. About 2 million people are in American prisons and jails.

The study identified 199 murder exonerations, 73 of them in capital cases. It also found 120 rape exonerations. Only nine cases involved other crimes. In more than half of the cases, the defendants had been in prison for more than 10 years.

The study's authors said they picked 1989 as a starting point because that was the year of the first DNA exoneration. Of the 328 exonerations they identified in the intervening years, 145 involved DNA evidence.

In 88 percent of the rape cases in the study, DNA evidence helped free the inmate. But bio-

logical evidence is far less likely to be available or provide definitive proof in other kinds of cases. Only 20 percent of the murder exonerations involved DNA evidence, and almost all of those were rape-murders.

The study, which will be presented Friday at a conference of defense lawyers in Austin, Texas, also found that very different factors contributed to wrongful convictions in rape and murder cases.

Some 90 percent of false convictions in the rape cases involved misidentification by witnesses, very often across races. In particular, the study says black men make up a disproportionate number of exonerated rape defendants.

The racial mix of those exonerated, in general, mirrored that of the prison population, and the mix of those exonerated of murder mirrored the mix of those convicted of murder. But while 29 percent of those in prison for rape are black, 65 percent of those who exonerated of the crime are.

Interracial rapes are, moreover, uncommon. Rapes of white women by black men, for instance, represent fewer than 10 percent of all rapes, according to the Justice Department. But in half of the rape exonerations where racial data was available, black men were falsely convicted of raping white women.

"The most obvious explanation for this racial disparity is probably also the most powerful," the study says. "White Americans are much more likely to mistake one black person for another than to do the same for members of their own race."

On the other hand, the leading causes of wrongful convictions for murder are, the study found, false confessions and perjury by co-defendants, informants, police officers or forensic scientists.

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