

SATURDAY, JAN. 14, 2006 *****

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Living

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INSIDE TODAY

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Not quite paradise

"Lost" actress Cynthia Watros pleads guilty to drunken driving in Hawaii.

C2

TELEVISION CRITICS ASSOCIATION



ABOVE: GENSER / HBO
Michael Imperioli and James Gandolfini of "The Sopranos"

'Sopranos' readies last spin

By RODNEY HO
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Pasadena, Calif. — "Sopranos" creator David Chase lived up to his reputation of Kremlin-like secrecy during a Television Critics Association press tour session Friday, parceling out morsels of information about the show's final season as if it were a case of national security. And the actors onstage followed suit.

"We've been asked not to speak and reveal things," said Lorraine Bracco, who plays Tony Soprano's psychiatrist, Dr. Jennifer Melfi.

Here's what little we picked up: HBO will air 12 episodes starting March 12, then eight more early in 2007. The plot revolves around how the mob families react now that Johnny Sack is in prison. "People have the chance to see a potential future for themselves in that," Chase said. "It has a ripple effect."

Guest stars will include Ben Kingsley (as himself), Julianna Margulies (as a real estate agent) and Hal Holbrook (as an ill scientist who gets involved with the mob). Chase did manage a joke: "That happens to Hal Holbrook all the time."

Bracco did note the bright side of such long breaks between sea-

► Please see TELEVISION C3

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BEST BETS

Naval Academy Gospel Choir

At Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta
 The choir celebrates the King holiday. Plus speaker, Rita Samuels, founder of Georgia Coalition of Black Women. 1 p.m. Jan. 14, 407 Auburn Ave. N.E. Atlanta. 404-526-8911. www.thekingcenter.org. Second performance: 10 a.m. Jan. 15 at Greenforest Community Baptist Church, 3250 Rainbow Drive, Decatur. 404-486-1120. www.greenforest.org.

King Commemorative Service

At Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta
 Former U.S. Rep. Floyd Flake is keynote speaker. 10 a.m. Jan. 16. Free. 407 Auburn Ave. N.E. Atlanta. 404-526-8911. www.thekingcenter.org.

King Birthday March and Rally

Downtown Atlanta
 Foot parade to commemorate the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Starts on Peachtree Street at Baker Street, heads to Auburn Avenue, then east to the Martin Luther King Jr. Historical Site. A rally follows. 1 p.m. Jan. 16. 404-584-0303. www.mlkmarchaar.org.

MORE THINGS TO DO THIS WEEKEND, C2

Walk into darkness

By JIM AUCHMUTEY
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Cliff Kuhn first encountered the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot when he wrote a column for an alternative newspaper called "The History You Weren't Supposed to Know."

Thirty years later, the Georgia State University historian is still trying to shed light on the city's worst outbreak of racial violence. "Most Atlantans have never heard of it," he says.

This year marks the centennial of the riot, in which thousands of whites rampaged through downtown Atlanta attacking black people

at random. At least two dozen were killed, according to historical accounts.

On Sunday, Kuhn will lead an hourlong walking tour of sites associated with the riot. It's part of a year of events sponsored by the Coalition to Remember the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot (www.1906atlantariot.org), a group representing the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site and numerous other institutions in the city. The tour begins at 1 p.m. under the gazebo in Woodruff Park, near where the bloodletting began.

1. Atlanta a century ago was a boomtown of more than 100,000, a sooty place of railyards and smokestacks. The space that would become Woodruff Park was at the heart of a dense commercial district of three- to five-story buildings broken by the occasional skyscraper (a few of which — such as the Candler and Flatiron buildings — still stand). **Sept. 22, 1906** was a humid Saturday. The city's four daily newspapers had been cranking out shrill and largely unfounded reports of black men assaulting white women. An angry crowd of 5,000 to 10,000 gathered around **Five Points**.

2. **Decatur Street**, running toward the site of today's Georgia State University, was crowded with saloons and brothels. Some white Atlantans viewed the area as a seedbed of crime, and it became an early target for rioters. About 9 p.m., a crowd surged down the street attacking blacks and vandalizing storefronts. The **major** rushed to the scene and tried to speak to the mob, but it was no use. He called the fire department, which turned its hoses on the rioters but was unable to scatter them.

3. **Five Points** was ground zero for the melee. As a trolley prepared to leave for **Grant Park** about 10:30 p.m., some in the crowd were incensed to see black men and white women riding in the same car. Rioters began pulling blacks off the trolleys and beating them, in several cases fatally. The streetcars soon stopped, and the mob fanned out in every direction, looking for more prey.

4. **Barbershops**, some of the most visible black-owned businesses downtown, were particularly vulnerable. Rioters smashed the front windows of Alonzo Herndon's shop on **Peachtree**. One branch of the rabble charged up **Marietta Street** and invaded a shop across from the post office, shooting a barber and a shoeshine man to death in front of their customers. The corpses were laid at the base of the monument honoring **Henry Grady**, the newspaperman who had proclaimed a New South.

5. Another arm of the mob chased a black man up **Peachtree** and beat him in front of the **Piedmont Hotel** (site of today's Equitable Building) before a cop dragged him to safety. Walter White, 13, witnessed some of the brutality as he was making the rounds with his father, a mail collector. Years later, after he had grown up to become executive secretary of the NAACP, he wrote his memoirs and described seeing rioters club a lame man to death "the withered foot ... in a pool of blood on the street."

6. From the intersection of **Peachtree and Forsyth** — now Margaret Mitchell Square — you can look north and see the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel, site of the Governor's Mansion in 1906. Gov. Joseph Terrell, who supposedly slept through the early stages of the riot, didn't call out the **state militia** until well after midnight. The mob dispersed when it began to rain in the wee hours of Sunday morning. But the trouble wasn't over. During the next three days, violence and killing spread to other parts of the city.



1. The Candler Building (seen in this vintage postcard), opened in 1906, the year of the riot.



4. The mob laid bodies of its victims at the base of the Henry Grady monument on Marietta Street. This postcard view is postmarked 1906.



3. Five Points, shown in this postcard from a decade after the riot, was the center of the violence. The caption calls Peachtree "The White Way" — a reference to street lighting, not race.



6. The Governor's Mansion stood on Peachtree. Its occupant was slow to respond to the riot.



5. Some of the violence played out in front of one of Atlanta's finest hotels, the Piedmont.

Sources: Cliff Kuhn of Georgia State University, Clarissa Myrick-Harris of Clark Atlanta University; "Negrothab" by Mark Sauerlein; "Veiled Violence" by David Fort Goddard; "The Atlanta Riot" by Gregory Mixon

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