

Richard's 'death wish'

AFP, New York

Richard Williams, the father of women's tennis stars Serena and Venus Williams, has threatened to kill the German man who has followed top-ranked Serena around the world if he should harm his 20-year-old daughter.

Albrecht Stromeyer, 34, was being held at Rikers Island in lieu of 3,000 dollars bail after being arraigned on three misdemeanour counts of stalking following his arrest at the National Tennis Centre after watching Serena practice at the US Open.

Stromeyer might not be in a hurry to post bail. The US Immigration and Naturalisation Service has filed a detainer so he would be taken into federal custody if he made bail. But Serena's father still worries.

"I don't think the guy is ever going to give up," Richard Williams told the New York Daily News. "At some point... something very tragic could take place."

"Would (anything) stop me from killing this guy if he did something to one of my daughters? I do not think all the police officers in the world could stop me."

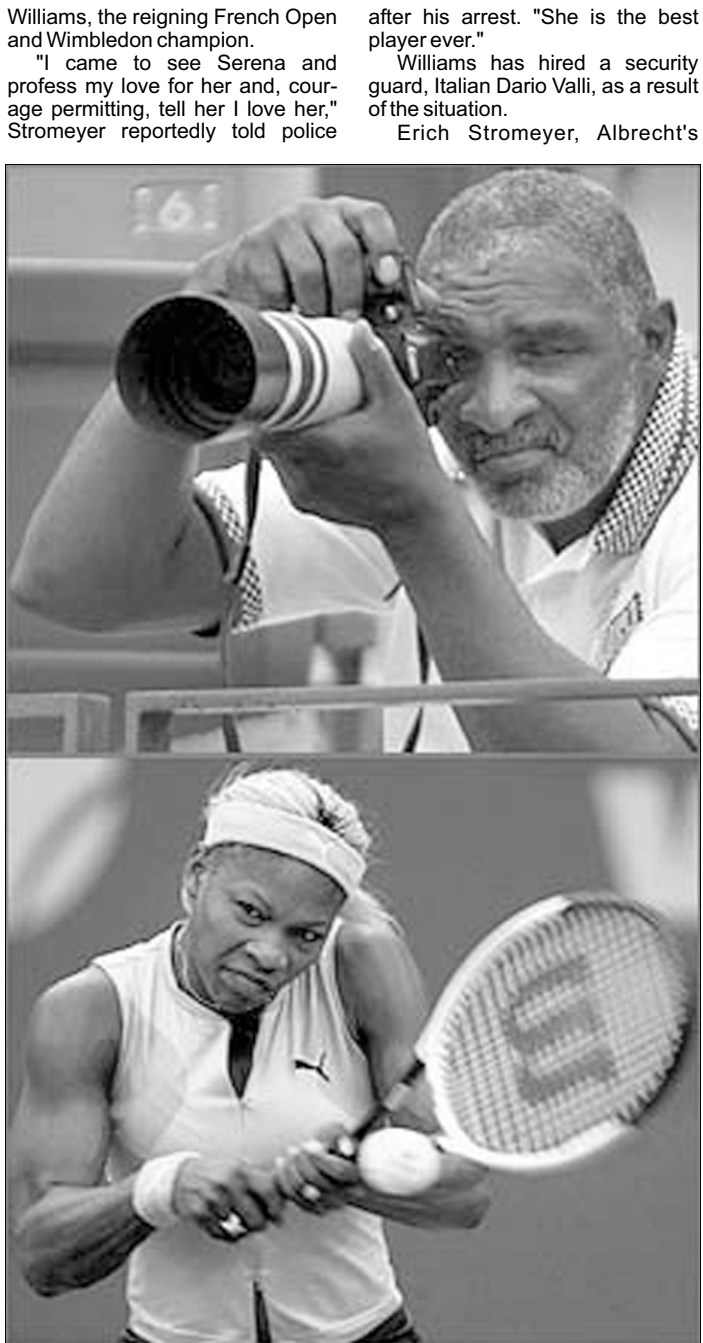
"A Williams is the most precious commodity to a Williams. A Williams would die for a Williams."

Stromeyer, who made no contact with Williams before being apprehended Saturday, has over the past 15 months followed her to events in Italy, Germany, France, Britain and the United States, with four arrests as a result of unwanted advances.

"The bail is so low, I think that encourages him to keep doing what he's doing," Richard Williams said. "It makes me wonder, 'Could he hurt Serena?'"

"I think this guy is sick. A sick person is not capable of thinking correctly and they are capable of doing anything."

A restraining order was also imposed upon Stromeyer barring him from the US Open and from making any type of contact with



WORRIED FATHER: Richard Williams taking pictures of his daughter Serena during one of her recent matches in the US Open.

PHOTO: INTERNET

Williams, the reigning French Open and Wimbledon champion.

"I came to see Serena and profess my love for her and, courage permitting, tell her I love her," Stromeyer reportedly told police

after his arrest. "She is the best player ever."

Williams has hired a security guard, Italian Dario Valli, as a result of the situation.

Erich Stromeyer, Albrecht's

father, told the newspaper he has pleaded with his son to give up his obsession with Williams.

"He has a mental problem," said the elder Stromeyer, a retired banker divorced from Albrecht's psychiatrist mother. "I told him so many times to drop it. I told him Serena Williams has no interest in him."

The elder Stromeyer also said his son poses no danger to Serena Williams. "Absolutely not," he said. "He has a long-time passion for Serena Williams. That is all. He knows the risk. He either does not understand it or he doesn't want to."

Serena Williams, whose skin-tight black "cat-suit" and "Pink Panther" outfits have been popular with fans, advanced to the women's quarterfinals with a 6-1, 6-1, victory over Czech 20th seed Daja Bedanova here Sunday.

Police officer Michael Esposito spotted Stromeyer peeking through a fence at Williams and recognised him from a photograph given to US Open security patrols. US Tennis Association officials warned Stromeyer police would have his photograph.

Police said Stromeyer flew here from Washington on Thursday and slept in Central Park that night. He was apprehended with a backpack filled with clothing and 207 dollars. Stromeyer told police he was unemployed.

Stromeyer was arrested at Wimbledon from breach of peace and criminal damage, shouting, "I love her. I would never hurt her," as police led him away. He was also seen outside the hotel where Williams stayed at the French Open.

Stromeyer first confronted Williams on February 11 at a WTA event in Belgium, taking a hotel room across the hall from her and pestering a trainer to arrange a meeting.

Later that month, Stromeyer registered at a hotel in Scottsdale, Arizona, where Williams was staying and left several messages and packages for her. He was later arrested for stripping off his clothes at the front desk after his demand to see her was denied.



Slovakia's Daniela's Hantuchova exults after defeating Justine Henin of Belgium at the US Open on September 2.

PHOTO: AFP

Counting on Kumble

REUTERS, New Delhi

"Googly from Kumble, Englishmen crumble!"

The slogan, first heard almost a decade ago, is back in circulation as the deciding fourth Test between India and England gets underway at the Oval on Thursday.

The leg-spinner captured 21 wickets for his first big international break as India marked England 3-0 at home in 1993. Today Anil Kumble is over 30 and has undergone major shoulder surgery.

But the "Smiling Assassin", who captured all 10 Pakistani second-innings wickets for a memorable series-leveilling win in 1999, proved last week at Headingley that he is still potent.

What is worse for England, he has also gained a lethal sidekick in Harbhajan "Turbanator" Singh.

Off-spinner Harbhajan, on a roll since capturing 32 wickets to lead a stunning 2-1 home series win against Australia last year, combined with Kumble for 11 scalps at Leeds in India's biggest test win abroad.

England captain Nasser Hussain, who held all the cards going into the match after an emphatic win in the first Test at Lord's, said India's comeback effort was "perfect".

India's big three batsmen, meanwhile, are in ominous form with Sachin Tendulkar so far aggregating 347 runs in this series, Rahul Dravid 385 and Saurav Ganguly 300.

Still, skipper Ganguly knows the onus during India's bid for their first Test series win outside south Asia in more than 16 years will be on his

spinners.

"Bowlers win Test matches," Ganguly said from Leeds. "Anil and Harbhajan will have to do the trick at The Oval."

But a glance at the statistics could boost Hussain's morale.

Both Kumble and Harbhajan, despite 332 and 144 wickets in 72 and 27 Tests respectively, have poor records away from home.

In his 36 Tests abroad, Kumble has managed 122 wickets at 39.13. Only four of his 19 five-wicket hauls have come away and he's never had a 10-wicket match overseas.

Harbhajan's 14 Tests outside India have fetched 44 scalps at a forgettable average of 37.65. His only five-wicket haul away from home came during India's 115-run loss to West Indies in Jamaica earlier this year.

The Oval, though, cannot be clubbed with other foreign venues.

It was there that leg-spinner Bhagwat Chandrasekhar grabbed six for 38 in 1971 as India clinched their first Test in England. That effort was recently picked by Wisden as the best ever by an Indian bowler.

Four years ago, Sri Lankan off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan devoured 16 victims on the pitch, which is now prepared to suit his Pakistan counterpart Saqlain Mushtaq, Surrey's overseas signing.

India and Kumble will still be under tremendous pressure, simply because the stakes are so high.

For Kumble, dropped in favour of Harbhajan during the West Indies tour, a match-winning performance would mean redemption.

In the Caribbean he had looked like an Egyptian mummy, with his face covered in bandages due to a broken jaw sustained while batting but still came on to bowl on a helpful

Antigua track because he felt he needed to prove his worth.

Showing tremendous heart, he sent down 14 overs for 29 runs and captured the wicket of Brian Lara.

"It was very disappointing having come to the West Indies with high hopes but not making it to the team in Trinidad and Barbados," Kumble said before returning home.

"I didn't want to leave this opportunity."

The gesture spoke volumes for his heart and determination to show he is still India's leading wicket-taking arm.

Kumble is again on a high after winning the battle at Leeds but he knows the war is not over. With Harbhajan as the perfect ally, he will back himself to win.

"There is just one word to describe Kumble -- great," Ganguly has said. He will be counting on that greatness in the coming days.

What to watch

FROM PAGE 13
Men's/Women's Quarterfinals (Live)
World Cup Soccer Mix
Taped Version at 8:00 pm
Sportscenter Hindi
Sport News
Live at 8:30 pm
STAR Sports
Gillette World Sports Special
Intl Sports News
Repeat at 8:30 am
World Cup Soccer Mix
Repeat at 11:00 pm
Soccer World Cup Heroes
Gento
Repeat at 3:00 pm
England vs Sri Lanka
Second Test, Day One
Live at 6:28 pm

Contracts row

FROM PAGE 13
"...Since the BCCI is not the author of the Participating Nations Agreement (PNA) and the player terms, it has no authority to include or delete any provisions," Dalmiya said in his letter to the players.

"We could, at best, put forward the proposals to the ICC and it is entirely up to the ICC to decide whether it would accept such proposals or not," he told the players.

The ICC contract stops players from endorsing products of rival companies to official sponsors 30 days either side of its events and contains a provision which allows officials to use player images for up to six months.

Meanwhile, Tony Irish, chief executive of the South African Cricketers' Association, was quoted on South African television as saying the players remained unhappy with the contracts and would not sign them.

"The United Cricket Board (UCB) has given an undertaking to the International Cricket Council (ICC) that our strongest squad will represent South Africa at the Champions Trophy, and our strongest squad leaves for Sri Lanka on Sunday," said UCB communications director Bronwyn Wilkinson.

'Fix' alert at

FROM PAGE 13
will now extend to the players' car park, the grandstand and even practice sessions.

Closed circuit cameras are to be deployed to keep track of players while they are in the pavilion. There will be many other cameras filming the players off the field too.

However, some children will be allowed access to players to request autographs at the Sinhalese Sports Club grounds. This too will be carefully supervised by the ministerial security division which usually provides protection to visiting dignitaries.

Batsmen will be escorted up to the boundary line by plainclothes policemen to ensure they will not have a last minute chance to communicate "vital information" to bookmakers.

It is not only the food that will be checked but the food handlers and waiters. Hotel staff who will come into contact with players will be screened and the process has already begun, police said.

All 10 Test playing nations plus Kenya and Holland will take part in the tournament, seen as a dress rehearsal for next year's World Cup in South Africa.

In previous years when games were hosted amid the threat of Tamil Tiger suicide bombings, the players were accorded security generally reserved for heads of state.

Now it is roughly equivalent to that accorded serial killers escorted to solitary confinement.

"Gambling on cricket has got so much out of hand that bookies take bets on how many players wear a certain type of sun glasses at the opening of a game," a police officer said. "What a captain plans to do can be turned into cash."

He said the money can be tempting large and difficult for some cricketers to resist.

AP, New York

These days, Pete Sampras is more like the rest of us -- serves suddenly shaky, volleys capricious, mechanics off, mind wallowing in self-doubt.

A match is going smoothly, rallies taking on a satisfying rhythm, then, mysteriously, everything is out of whack. All those lessons and magazine tips we've diligently memorised come flooding back in a frenzy of self-analysis.

Is the elbow properly skyward, the racket head downward in the back-scratch position on serve? Is the toss high enough, forward enough? Should the serve be flatter or have more slice? Is the arm following through? Are the knees bent? Is the body turned 90-degrees for groundstrokes, the front foot stepping toward the net, the point of contact low, the finish high to impart peak top spin?

The easy flow of movement gives way to jerky-jerky motions. There is so much to remember and so little time to figure it out before another game is lost, and then one more, and then the match. We walk off shaking our heads or tossing our rackets, victims of too much thinking.

For Sampras, tennis has always been so effortless. Or at least that's how he made it seem since he won the first of his record 13 Grand Slam titles at the U.S. Open in 1990. Certainly he had his struggles -- playing through sickness and tears and injuries -- but his game, itself,

has always been so elegant, so fluid, so simple.

Now he looks as if he's thinking way too much, like the rest of us, and in his misery we see ourselves. We recognise his vulnerability and empathize with him, rooting for him rather than merely marvelling at him.

Sampras and the Open fans were in wet limbo Monday until evening, the rain as incessant as it had been Sunday when Sampras and Greg Rusedski led to wait all day to play. Rusedski led 5-4 on serve when play was suspended.

After waiting all day once more, they came back on court at 6:18 p.m., looking as if they both needed a shave. More than three hours later, Sampras secured a 7-6, 4-6, 7-6, 3-6, 6-4 third-round victory, helped by fans who encouraged him with more affection than he had known in the years when he won so easily.

"Shake it off, Pete," one fan shouted after he clunked an overhead. "You're a champion," another reminded him when he seemed to be sagging. "Let's go, Pete," they all chanted to lift him for the last few games. Sampras looked around, taking it all in, riding their emotion and responding with uncharacteristic roars of his own.

He needed the crowd. Brilliant one moment, inept the next, he alternated powerful passing shots with misses on the easiest of volleys. In the end, staying true to his style, forcing the action by coming forward, he broke Rusedski for the first time since the second set, crushing three passing shots and watching the Brit send a final forehand wide.

For one fatiguing match against a dangerous player, Sampras showed he is still a threat to beat anyone.

"I'm enjoying winning these close matches," Sampras said, though he acknowledged that he's "not quite as dominant as I once was."

He knows it was the third round and it takes seven victories to win the Open. Next up is No. 3 Tommy Haas on Tuesday. Sampras, the four-time champion and the runner-up the past two years, would have to win five matches in seven days to capture the title again.

That's hard at any age and harder still at 31, as Sampras is. To do it at this tender moment in his career, when his confidence is down and his game is in disarray, would be almost inconceivable.

"It's more difficult to recover from tough matches and be ready to go the next day," Martina Navratilova was saying during the afternoon, talking about her own modest comeback attempts at 45 but adding that it applied to other aging players.

Just like weekend hackers, the best pros crumble inexplicably and get into trouble trying to figure out what went wrong.

"You lose twice serving for the match, it becomes a pattern," she said. "Next time you're serving for the match -- 'Oh, my God, can I serve it?' That's not just me, that's anybody that's been out there playing for a while. Then you start playing carefully. You have the shot, but you just want to make it instead of going for it."

Does she see that in Sampras?
"Yep," she said. "Definitely."

Sampras lives to fight Eying a centenary

FROM PAGE 13
but former world number one Gustavo Kuerten won an easy passage into the fourth round, when his opponent Nicolas Massu retired while trailing the Brazilian 6-1, 5-4.

The winner of a record 13 grand slams, Sampras is without a title of any kind since Wimbledon 2000. He is not the force he once was, but this is New York and the Americans love a winner.

Sampras has done just that four times here at Flushing Meadows and the loudest, rowdiest fans in tennis were not about to lose their hero.

He did not let them down in the rain-interrupted match, which spanned two days.

"I enjoy playing here," Sampras said. "I just love it. I enjoy this facility, the courts, the crowd. This is our Super Bowl here in the U.S. so I'm pretty pumped," the runner-up in 2000 and 2001 added.

Haas may disagree. He beat Thomas Enqvist 6-4, 3-6, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 to reach the fourth round and knows a pumped up Sampras will be an enormous obstacle next.

"I am playing against maybe the greatest player ever tomorrow," he said.

In the women's draw, Daniela Hantuchova overcame a lengthy

rain delay and a thumb injury to score an upset 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 victory over eighth seed Justine Henin.

The 11th seeded Hantuchova, who has never advanced past the second round of any grand slam event in her young career, had looked poised for an easy win on Sunday until rain interrupted their fourth round clash and ended with her sprawled across the wet hard court with a sprained thumb.

At the start of the day there was some concern Hantuchova might not complete the contest, the Slovak rating her chances as no better than 50-50.

But she fought through and her reward is a quarterfinal meeting with world number one Serena Williams, who has yet to drop a set and lost just 10 games in her opening four matches.

Fourth seed Lindsay Davenport wasted little time in bulldozing past Italy's Silvia Farina Elia 6-3, 6-1 to advance into the quarter-finals where she will meet Elena Bovina who ousted Francesca Schiavone 7-6, 6-4.

Third-seeded American Jennifer Capriati continued her impressive run disposing of countrywoman Amy Frazier 6-1, 6-3 to advance to a quarter final clash with Amelie Mauresmo who ousted Kim Clijsters 4-6, 6-3, 7-5.

explained Tendulkar who added that India's come-from-behind series victory over Steve Waugh's side at home during 2000-01 has been his most memorable campaign.

"They had won 15 matches in a row so to come back and win the series after losing the first match by 10 wickets was something special."

Tendulkar added that he had no idea when he started how many Tests he would play but said the advice he had received from his coach and brother had been invaluable.

"I just wanted to go out and enjoy every moment, face every challenge, that's what my coach and elder brother taught me. They also told me there were no short cuts in the game and that if you looked for short cuts that would be the end of your career. And Tendulkar admitted he was a worried teenager when he made his debut. "I was in terrible shape, I was only 16. We were playing Pakistan, my feet were not moving only my hands."

"I thought I was a bit out of my depth but things got better from the next Test."

They certainly did. Tendulkar has now scored 8,351 runs at an average of 57.90 to lie seventh in the list of all-time Test run scorers.

At Headingley he surpassed his hero and Australia great Don Bradman's mark of 29 Test hundreds.

US OPEN IN BRIEF

AP, New York

Highlights Monday of the 16.17 million dollars U.S. Open:

WEATHER
Rainy and cool with a high of 68. Rain delayed the start of play more than seven hours.

ATTENDANCE
Day session: 30,863. Night session: 18,273. Total: 49,136.

WINNERS: Men, Third Round
No. 3 Tommy Haas, No. 11 Andy Roddick, No. 17 Pete Sampras, No. 24 Sjeng Schalken, No. 26 Juan Ignacio Chela, No. 28 Fernando

Fourth Round
No. 1 Lleyton Hewitt, No. 6 Andre Agassi, No. 20

Women, Fourth Round
No. 3 Jennifer Capriati, No. 4 Lindsay Davenport, No. 10 Amelie Mauresmo, No. 11 Daniela Hantuchova.

LOSERS: Men, Third Round
No. 7 Juan Carlos Ferrero, No. 29 Thomas

Fourth Round
No. 13 Roger Federer, No. 14

Women, Fourth Round
No. 7 Kim Clijsters, No. 8 Justine Henin, No. 13 Silvia Farina Elia.

STAT OF THE DAY
68 of 100 matches scheduled for Monday were postponed.

QUOTE OF THE DAY
"He's a great player from the past. You're used to seeing Pete Sampras, 13 Grand Slam champion. It's not the same player." -- Greg Rusedski

Greg saves worst for last

REUTERS, New York

Britain's Greg Rusedski launched a bitter attack on Pete Sampras just minutes after the American had ousted him from the U.S. Open in a five-set tussle on Monday night.

The winner of 12 career titles said Sampras was practically washed up, a slower and less fit version of the player who won a record 13 grand slam crowns.

"I lost the match rather than he won the match," the Briton said.

"I'd be surprised if he wins his next match against (Tommy) Haas. To be honest with you, I'd be very surprised."

"I don't really see it. The movement is not the same and the fitness is not the same."

"I guess he still enjoys playing...You're used to seeing Pete Sampras, 13 times grand slam champion -- it's not the same player."

Sampras has a thumping 8-1 record in head-to-head matches over the Briton but Rusedski said he should have beaten the American.

Victoria vex

FROM PAGE 13
after dodging past two national defenders Rajani and Hasan Al-Mamun.

After surviving those close calls, the all-reds finally got their much expected lead four minutes later when Rahel handled the ball while trying to clear a Moni pass. Sujon stepped up to convert the spotkick, beating the Victoria custodian through the right side corner of the net.

However, they failed to retain the lead in the face of some attacking football from Victoria. They got the equaliser in the 85th minute through Abul, who, after being nicely fed by substitute Rinku from the right flank, sent home a brilliant left-foot shot.

In the shoot out, Al-Amin, Khokon Das, Abul and Rahel scored for Victoria while their teammate Arman hit the side post. On the other hand, only Rajani and Sujon could convert their spot kicks while Tutul brilliantly saved Moni and Hasan Al-Mamun's shots.

Yellow cards: Al-Amin, Sharif (Victoria) and Arman, Moni (Muktijoddha)

TEAMS
Victoria SC: Tareq (Tutul), Govinda, Jet, Shipon, Arman, Al-Amin, Kaiser, Abul, Rahel, Polo (Rinku) and Sharif (Khokon Das).

Muktijoddha Sangsad: Biplab, Hasan Al-Mamun, Rajani, Sujon, Papal, Abdullah, Arman, Matur Munna, Rakib, Moni and Alfaz.

Referee: Ibrahim Nesar.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Silly person

4 Metric unit

8 Hold the scepter

12 Speck

13 Humdinger

14 List-ending abbr.

15 "Hurry up!"

17 Santa's carryall

18 "Barn!"

21 High-IQ, maybe

24 Actress Joanne

25 Have — at (try)

26 Bad hair-piece

28 South-western terrain

32 Parliamantarian

34 Blyrcresom dosage

36 Emulate Louganis

37 Heat

39 Astronaut Grissom

41 New Jersey

DOWN

1 Billboards

2 No tee-totaler

3 Robotic cashier's wives' town

4 Sullen stare

5 Throw one's hat into the ring

6 Got off one's high horse?

7 Silenced

8 Saved

9 Hexagonal state

10 Meshwork

11 Fraternal organization

12 Festive affair

22 Lab assistant

23 Flop

27 Throttle

29 Duck

30 Eager, plus

31 Alluring

33 Mrs. Bob Hope

35 Urban transport

38 Cath. or Prot.

40 Elan

43 Sand trap club

45 Mag. staffers

46 Prince pastime

Solution time: 27 mins.

CRYPTOQUIP

T G D B S W P J M W W J G D E J C

X D O W K D V I J X W Z D B . T G S

B W C M E C O G L C P M T L C G

V W K D C L O Z D J C E M D ?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN AN ASTRONAUT ON A ROCKET WANTS ASPIRIN, WILL HE TAKE A SPACE CAPSULE?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals T

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.