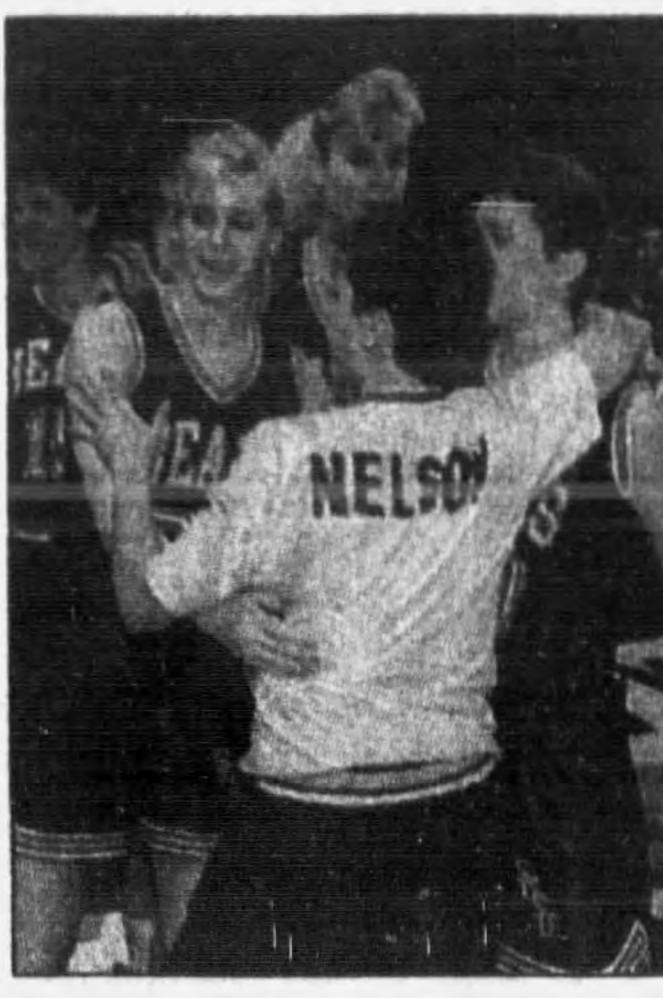
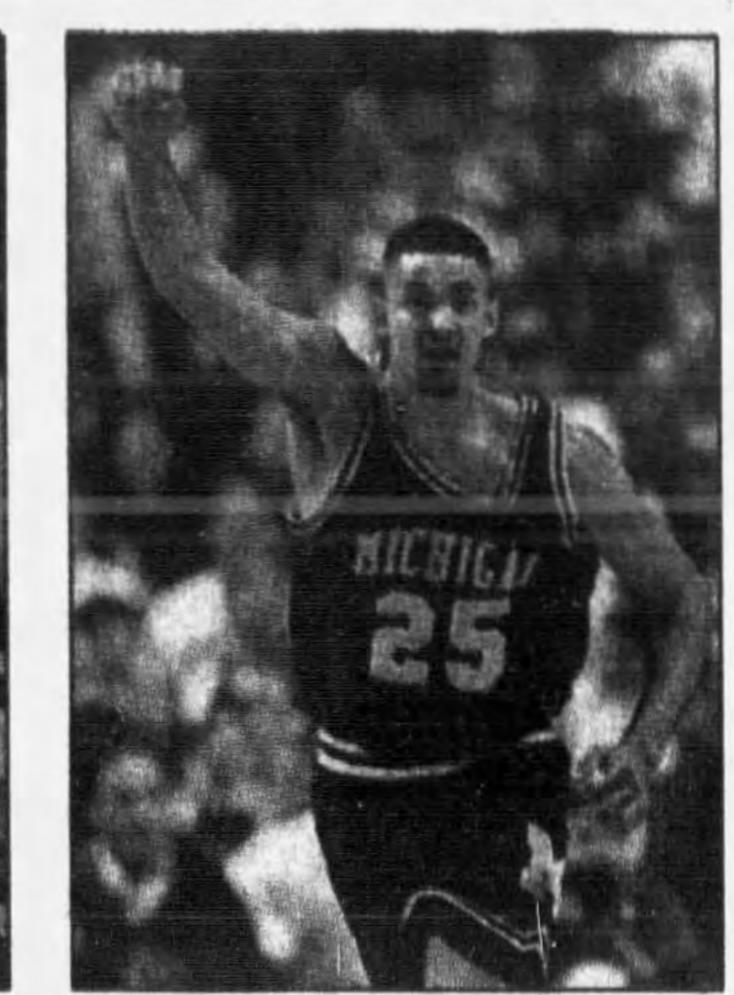
Friday

#### Master's touch:

Saxophonist Sonny Rollins proves he has no equal when it comes to creating improvisational masterpieces from simpler, classical tunes. In Overnight.







The Final Four(s): The upstart Southwest Missouri State women (left) and Michigan's freshmen (right) are in the spotlight as the NCAA tourneys come down to the wire. In Sports.



#### Softball preview:

With a pitching staff anchored by Gina Ugo (left), Sandburg should be one of the state's best softball teams this season. Still, this may finally be Lockport's year. In Sports.

#### Weather

Chicago and vicinity: Friday: Cloudy, windy, warmer, afternoon rain or snow likely; high 45. Friday night: Windy, cold; low 26. Saturday: Morning snowshowers. The national weather report is in Sec. 2, pg. 9.

By John Schmeltzer

A recession and lethal competition claimed another venerable Chicago retailer Thursday.

Polk Brothers Inc., joining the ranks of Colby's Furniture and Homer's Furniture, will cease business at the conclusion of a closeout sale slated for later this month, according to company vice president Howard Polk.

The family-owned retailer, which for 57 years was known to Chicagoans as the place where a deal could be made for furniture and

'There's a lot of history here. Polk Brothers is an institution in this town.'

**Howard Polk** 

appliances, said its five remaining stores would close "due to competitive pressures and the economy."

There was a time when Polk owned the Chicago appliance and electronics market. A "Let's Make a Deal" mentality seeped from the very pores of its salesmen.

"We started that practice in retailing," said Polk, noting that consumers have learned they can nego-

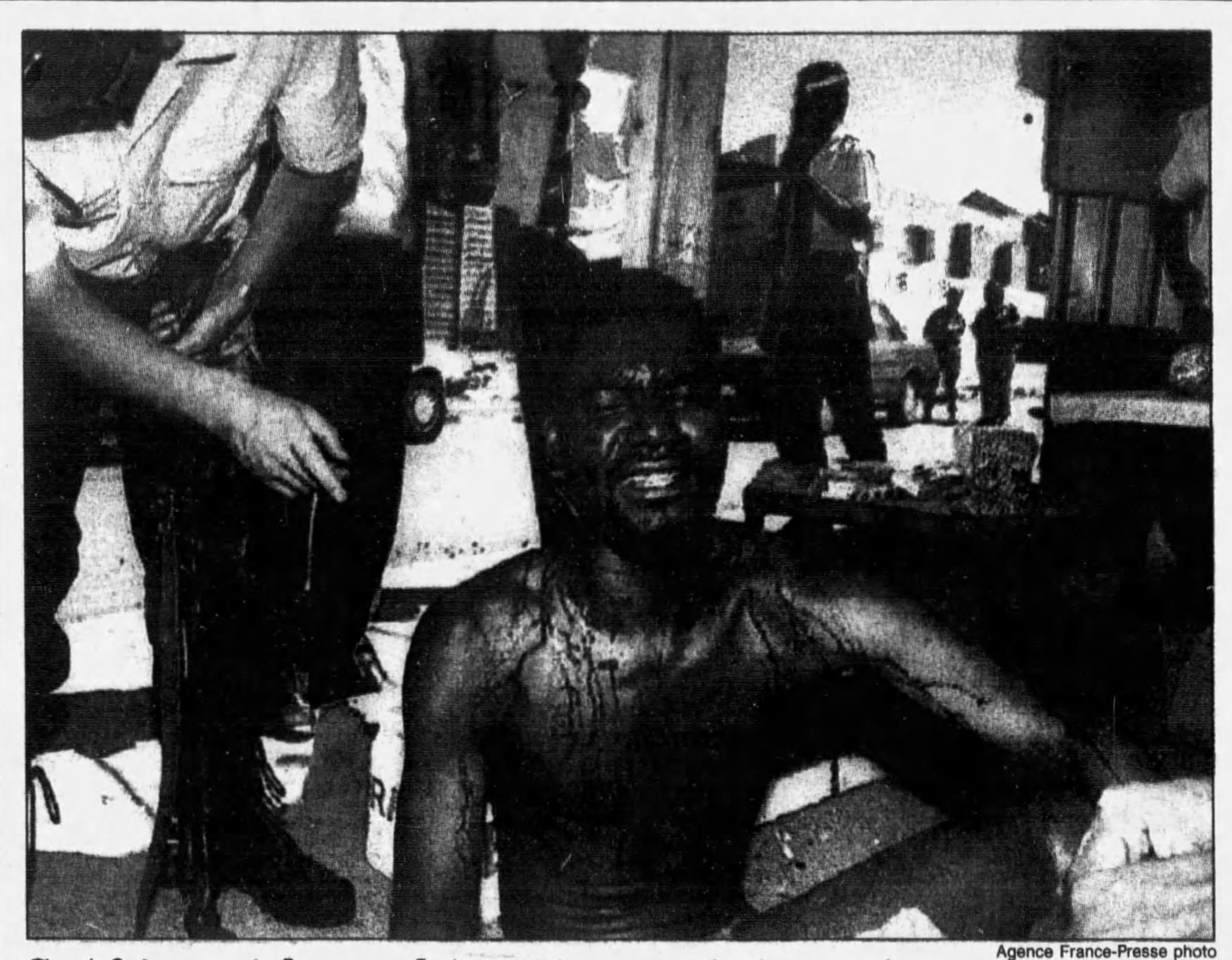
In the early 1980s sales reached \$150 million a year at the profitable firm, which then had 17 stores across the metropolitan area. But

since 1987, when a fire destroyed its Melrose Park headquarters, the retailer has been closing stores in an effort to stem red ink.

The decision to shut its remaining stores comes only five months after Polk brought in a new president from another old-line Chicago retailer, Arthur Landen from John M. Smyth Co.'s Homemakers furniture operation, in hopes of rescuing the rapidly sinking retail operation.

"Our bills are all current and we See Polk, pg. 17

# Clinton seeks momentum in



S. African violence claims 16 more victims

A resident of Alexandra near Johannesburg waits teen more people were reported dead in new for first aid after he was stabbed Thursday. Six- South African factional violence. Story, Page 17.

### Brown works to collect black support

By Steve Daley Chicago Tribune

NEW YORK—The wail of the police siren and the howl of the irate citizen are the signature tunes of the New York Democrat-

ic primary. For Bill Clinton and Jerry Brown, pursuing the state's 244 pledged delegates in Tuesday's primary, every campaign stop presents an opportunity for confrontation.

The Arkansas governor and his aides Thursday claimed that the beleaguered front-runner's campaign had regained momentum. "I



have a great feeling about New York," Clinton said while shaking hands after a Wall Street rally.

But this is a metropolis with an appetite for theatrics and an unquenchable thirst for scandal, and it is unclear how the presumptive Democratic nominee will fare.

Clinton came to New York after losing to Brown in the Connecticut primary and needing a boost to assure anxious Democrats that he was not damaged goods.

The Arkansas governor kicked off his campaign Sunday by telling WCBS-TV that he had smoked marijuana more than 20 years earlier in England, and he generated guffaws with his earnest conten-

tion that he "didn't inhale." Brown, meanwhile, has been collecting labor endorsements while strolling the sidewalks of New York with Jesse Jackson, the man he says he wants beside him on the Democratic ticket.

Brown is striving to erode the overwhelming black support Clinton has enjoyed in other primary states, and there is some polling evidence that the strategy is work-

But the pursuit of select constituencies is never without a cost in New York, and boosting Jackson is hardly a plus with Jewish voters.

On Wednesday, Jackson acknowledged he might like to be Brown's running mate, or Clin-

See Primary, pg. 16

## Gotti verdict hailed as major blow to mob

By George E. Curry Chicago Tribune

NEW YORK-John Gotti, reputed head of the nation's most powerful mob syndicate, was convicted Thursday of murder and other racketeering charges in a case prosecutors said made a serious dent in organized crime.

Gotti was found guilty of all charges: murdering or conspiring to murder six people, obstruction of justice, bribery, loan-sharking, illegal gambling and tax fraud.

His co-defendant, Frank Locascio, also a member of the powerful Gambino crime family, was convicted of the same charges except for one count of gambling.

Sentencing has been set for June 23. At that time, Gotti, 51, could receive three life sentences plus 105 years in prison. Locascio, 59,

could get one life sentence and 75

Gotti's lawyer, Albert Krieger of Miami, said he would appeal the verdicts, which were reached in 13 hours of deliberation after a 10week trial.

James Fox, head of the FBI's New York office, called the conviction "the most important crossroads" and predicted it would deal a major blow to the mob. "I'm not saying it's going to happen in a year," he said, "but the mob as we know it in New York City and this country is on its way out."

When the jurors filed into court Thursday, Gotti smiled broadly and seemed confident that he would be acquitted.

When the jury forewoman said "guilty" 25 times—13 times for Gotti and 12 for Locascio-Gotti showed no emotion. At one point,



John Gotti could receive three life sentences.

the nattily attired Gotti motioned for his attorney to remain calm in the face of the verdicts.

A high school dropout who rose See Gotti, pg. 17

## Extradition target says his real crime is success

By Nicholas Horrock and Linnet Myers Chicago Tribune

WARSAW—Peering anxiously through steel-rimmed glasses in Warsaw's infamous Rakowiecka prison, David Bogatin looks somewhat like Woody Allen in "Take the Money and Run."

For a man who became a hugely successful banker in Poland and a millionaire in the U.S., he doesn't look so good. They have taken his tie, he has a two-day growth of beard and he is chain-smoking so fast that one cigarette is lit before the other is out.

Bogatin, 46, has been waiting here two months for the public prosecutor to decide whether to extradite him to the U.S. on charges of fleeing a 1987 conviction for tax evasion.

He's the first person to be sought under a 1927 U.S. extradition treaty with Poland.

But Bogatin said he doesn't believe the United States wants him back so much as the Poles want him out. He's been negotiating with American prosecutors since 1989 to settle the tax debt and finds it mysterious they sought to extradite him five years after he left the country.

"When Bogatin opened his bank, our regulations were still very liberal," said Elzbieta Rumowska, spokeswoman for the National Bank of Poland.

"There was no law asking whether someone had a criminal record. That regulation started functioning very soon afterward. If he'd only asked for the license a few months later, he would have See Bogatin, pg. 9

ton's. Thus far, Clinton hasn't

## Close your eyes and fly into Chicago's future

By Gary Washburn Transportation writer

Hop into your solar-powered car, activate the collision-defense system and switch on the computer to find the least congested route. Now head for the new state-of-the-art Lake Calumet airport to catch a supersonic flight to Australia, that popular weekend getaway spot.

It's the 21st Century, and the brand-new field you're about to visit is very different from O'Hare International, that stodgy old

relic that your grandparents used. Gone are ticketing and baggage check-in areas and the long lines stretching in front of them, gone are the bland fast-food stands and the collection of predictable souvenir shops strung through the terminal, and gone are the forced marches down seemingly endless concourses to board a plane.

In its place is part multi-modal transportation\_center, part regional shopping mall, with a dash of convention center and maybe a little Las Vegas thrown in too. It's a glitzy place designed to be

fun but, even more important, convenient and user-friendly. Passengers will shed their cum-

bersome bags as soon as they arrive, buy tickets from a machine, have their choice of bullet train, bus or helicopter as well as jet, then be whisked through the terminal by small, automated cars. It's far too early to know how

many of these innovative new features will become reality at Lake Calumet, but they're the types of things that planners say could be hallmarks of the nextcentury airport.

A bistate committee selected Lake Calumet, pushed strongly by Mayor Richard Daley, as the site for a new regional airport last month. But the project has numerous hurdles to clear before planners get to the fine points of design, the first hurdle being the spring legislative season that

started this week in Springfield.

Under the most optimistic estimates, Lake Calumet will open in about 10 years. Critics say completion will take much longer—assuming the site proves feasible in the first place.

But whether or not the Chicago area ultimately gets a new field, air traffic is expected to grow dramatically in the next century. It follows that new airports will be built in the U.S. to accommodate the demand.

Ramon Ricondo, a Chicago airport consultant, looks for improvements in the future that will help address one of the biggest gripes of the 20th Century air traveler: why "the ground trip takes longer than the air trip."

"Smart" highways and cars employing computers to help motorists find the fastest way to the airport offer one hope for the future, Ricondo said. Another is rail lines similar to

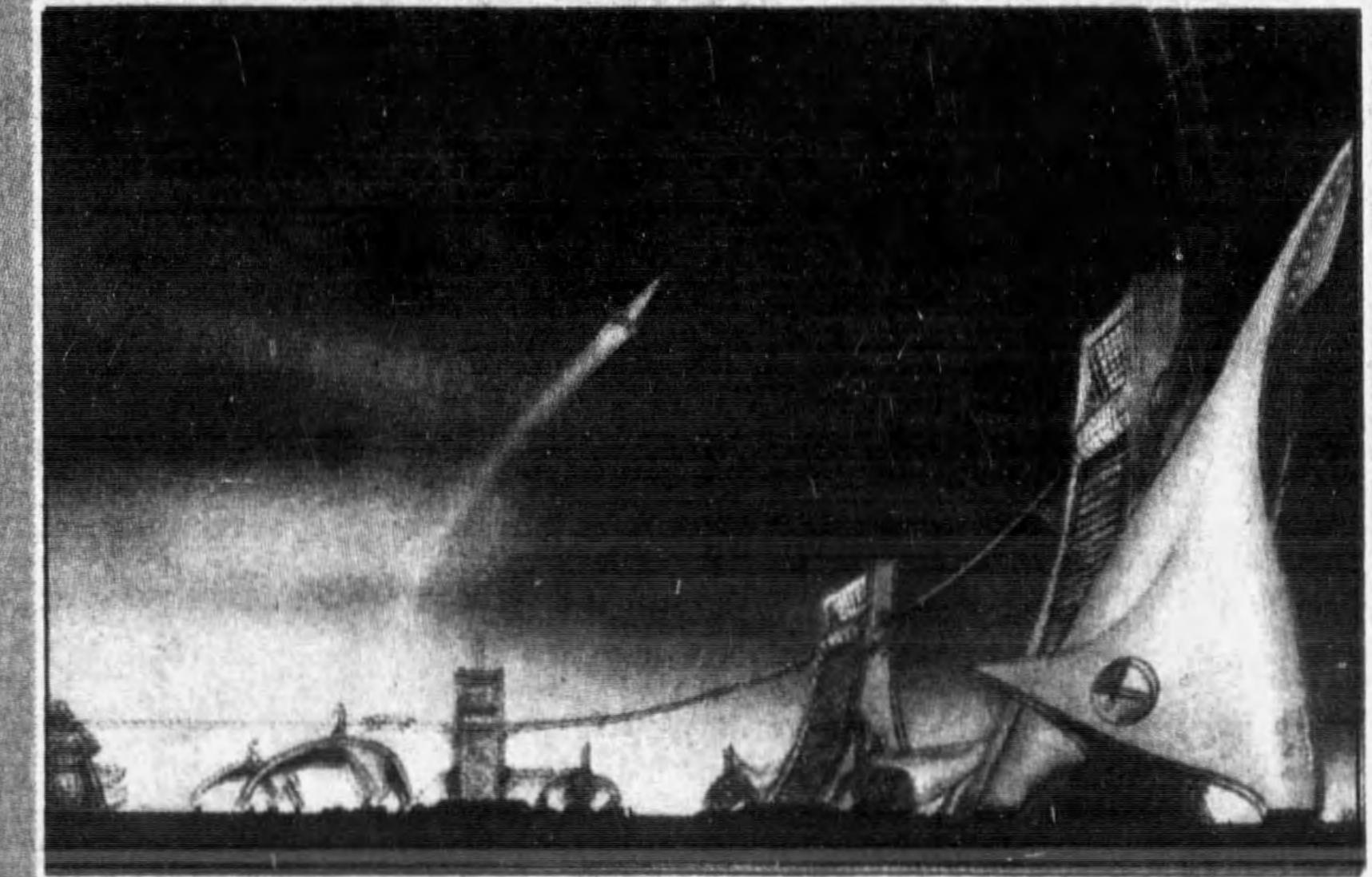
Airports of the 21st Century could become centers that offer access to different types of transportation, retail shopping and daycare facilities.

Lake Calumet: A 21st Century airport

Innovations New features that may be included in airport design

Choice of bullet train, bus, helicopter or plane. Automated ticket purchase and shuttles directly to

planes Computerized baggage check at point of arrival Four-star restaurants # Upscale shopping



Artist's drawing courtesy of Greater Orlando Aviation Authority Artist's concept of 21st Century airport showing hypersonic aircraft docked at ports that are accessed by an express monorail system.

See Airport, pg. 16 Sources: Greater Orlando Aviation Authority, news reports

Chicago Tribune

### Bogatin

Continued from page 1

been asked. We are only learning." The Russian-born Bogatin believes his real crime is success. In less than four years he set up a profitable candy and clothing manufacturing business and perhaps the most modern banking operation in the country: 17 branches with six more under construction and \$140 million in de-

"Why do I think they're doing this?" Bogatin asks rhetorically during his interview in a barren prison interrogation room. "I think I become too big too quick and it was scaring somebody. . . . I don't know who. This I cannot tell you. But our plans for 1992—to open 250 branches throughout Poland—scared somebody. If they don't stop me as they did now, lit was going to be one of the biggest banks in Poland."

For much of his time in Poland, Bogatin has been hailed as the sort of foreign investor who could help this beleaguered former communist country make it in the new world order, someone who not only brought investment but also stayed to build a business.

In a country with massive unemployment, Bogatin's investments gave jobs to about 1,600 people and had a positive economic impact on 10,000 more, his supporters say.

Some 1,390 citizens of Lublin, nearly 100 miles southeast of Warsaw, wrote President Bush in February begging him to prevent Bogatin's extradition. "The extradition of David Bogatin means the end of the bank," they wrote. "The end of the bank means economic and social chaos. Our freedom may come to an end in such chaos."

Bogatin's Polish and American lawyers believe, as one put it, "He's being railroaded." They contend the 1927 treaty under which his extradition is sought does not cover tax-evasion cases. Efforts by Bogatin to post bail to avoid detention were rebuffed by a Polish court, and his U.S. lawyers have not been allowed to directly

present evidence at any hearings. One of the lawyers, Robert Simels, said he has had more than 60 conversations since 1989 with U.S. prosecutors about how Bogatin could settle his tax account. In fact, Simels said, he was walking into a meeting with a New York state prosecutor when he learned Bogatin had been arrested in Po-

In a 2-1 decision on March 24, a three-judge court in Lublin recommended that Bogatin be extradited to the U.S. on the false-documents charge to which he had pleaded guilty in New York, not the main case of federal tax evasion.

This may result in a strange twist of fate for the Justice De-Rogovin, another of Bogatin's lawyers, since under extradition law the U.S. can only bring Bogatin to trial for the charge on which he was extradited.

For a man raised under communism, Bogatin seemed to have had a natural affinity for capitalism, and his business ventures in the U.S., Austria and Poland have been extraordinarily successful, though often tinged with charges of wrongdoing. In the latest case, U.S. authorities charged he was involved in a gas-tax scheme with a Mafia family in New York.

Bogatin was born June 2, 1945, in Saratov, a Soviet technological center on the Volga River. His grandfather, a Talmudic scholar, was imprisoned in 1937 because he didn't abandon religious teaching; he was murdered that same year by other inmates.

His father, who privately continued the traditions of Judaism long after it was illegal, spent 18 years in prison in Siberia because someone told authorities he defaced a picture of Stalin by hanging the office door's key so it covered the leader's face.

David Bogatin's younger brother Yakov, in an interview, remembered when their mother took her four children to visit their father. The father had secreted little cans of milk for the children from his own meager rations, but in an unprovoked indignity the guard ruined each can by plunging a knife through the top to check what was in them.

David Bogatin served in the So-1966 as a military adviser in what was then North Vietnam, and re- and fraud. reer as a printer.

In the mid-1970s, after marrying and becoming a father, he lost his job, he said, because he agreed to print material clandestinely for Jewish dissidents. His brother contends the KGB then had David blacklisted, finally forcing him to leave his wife and son and emigrate to the U.S. in 1977.

Bogatin remembers arriving in New York with \$3 and an uncle's address. "The next day I went to the factory." He lived in Howard Beach, staying clear of the main Russian community miles away in Brighton Beach.

"You cannot make new lives being just between Russians, you have to become American," he said. "You have to work 15 to 16 hours a day to make a living."

His is not the typical immigrant's story. He saved enough lugging paint in the factory to buy a car. "A Buick LeSabre," he said. "I think I paid \$700 to \$750." It enabled Bogatin to run a sort of private cab service.

The car business led to a gas station, which in little more than three years led to a fuel distributorship—and to Michael Markowitz, a flamboyant Jewish immigrant of Romanian extraction.

was through Markowitz that he ended up in business with Lawrence Iorizzo, a 450-pound fuel distributor, and ultimately Michael Franzese, a capo of the New York Columbo crime family who was called the "Yuppie Don" because of his society lifestyle and interest in moviemaking.

In his recent book "Quitting the Mob," Franzese remembers his first meeting with Bogatin and others in the early 1980s. "They were tough honest Russians, who had clawed their way out of Russia, come to America and made a

Said one business associate who asked not to be identified, "You've got to admire David. Not only is he very bright, but he's a gambler. I've seen him borrow money to take a long shot on a deal and never waver. His deals come in 999 out of a 1,000

This source said there was nothing illegal about Bogatin's first success as a businessman. In the early 1980s, as fuel prices in the Northeast were skyrocketing, Bogatin's steely nerves made it possible for him to trade in chancy business syndicates buying fuel on the spot market.

More often than not he and others used borrowed money to buy shiploads of oil in transit, betting that by the time the vessel made a U.S. port, the oil's price would have risen and they could resell it at a profit.

"They sold this to no-name brand fuel companies, undercutting the national gasoline chains,' the business associate said. After five years in America, David Bogatin had arrived.

At almost the same time, in 1982, the State of New York changed the way it collected federal excise taxes on gasoline. Previously the state's 13,000 gasoline dealers had collected the tax, but the legislature thought it would be easier to audit some 600 distributors instead. As one legislator later quipped, "We traded petty larcency for grand larceny."

Billions of gallons of gasoline flowed through those distributorships each year, and as much as 27 cents of the price of every gallon was a tax.

Gasoline shipments were often owned by syndicates and the state required that one distributor in a transaction had to collect and pay the taxes. Tax cheats created a "daisy chain" of paper firms, disguising which one was responsible for collecting and passing on the partment, according to Mitchell tax revenue to the state and federal governments, covering the trail with mountains of paperwork. When investigators finally determined which firm was legally responsible, they often found that it was run by a front man who had disappeared.

> In Bogatin's case, for instance, a Polish painter who couldn't speak English was listed as president of one firm. He eventually returned to Poland, never to be heard of

Three years later in 1985, Roderick C.W. Chu, the New York state tax commissioner, would estimate the Bogatin group's tax scams cost the government an estimated \$1 billion a

The problem, the Russians quickly found out, was that they had unwanted business partners from the Mafia.

In his book, Franzese remembers bargaining with Bogatin and Markowitz. "Putting aside my warm feelings for the men, I cut a deal that was ice cold. I would take over the Russian's billion-dollar operation for 75 percent of the pie. They would get the remaining 25 percent."

In the mid-1980s, Iorizzo was arrested on a separate matter. After a rough time in jail, where Franzese reports Iorizzo's 450 pounds was paraded nude before jeering prisoners in a lockup, he "rolled over" on Franzese and the

gas deal. He delivered Bogatin and Markowitz to government prosecutors in the process. They were charged viet army for three years, spent in New York, Florida and federal courts with tax evasion, conspiracy

turned to Saratov to take up a ca- Simels, Bogatin's lawyer, says that it was Markowitz, Bogatin's partner, who dealt with Franzese. He and Bogatin's business associate describe Bogatin as an administrative genius who kept the oil

"Markowitz paid the Italians. It was protection. That's not newthat's been going on in New York for 100 years," one of Bogatin's

associates said. On April 6, 1987, Bogatin pleaded guilty in federal court in Brooklyn to conspiring to violate federal tax laws and later in New York State Court in Albany to a state charge. The plea agreement left him facing \$5.8 million in fines and a jail sentence of 2½ to

8 years. Bogatin now repudiates that plea. "First of all, I had bad ad-



David Bogatin believes his real crime is success. "I think I become too big too quick and it was scaring somebody."

viser, bad lawyer. Second of all my bad English, let's put it that way. Basically I am saying [I am] not knowing what [I am] saying."

Simels and Rogovin, a former counsel to the Central Intelligence Agency, have filed motions in federal court to withdraw and set aside his guilty plea.

Guilty pleas are hard to abandon, but Bogatin's court performance may help. After a long hearing in which the judge spent much time making sure Bogatin understood what he was doing and that it was of his own free will, it came time for him to plead:

Judge: "Now, just in your own words, tell me what happened

Bogatin, reading from a card prepared by his lawyer: "Well, from approximately 1983 to the spring of 1985, I with Lawrence Iorizzo and others had a couple of meetings to relate . . ."

Judge: "I am sorry?" Bogatin's lawyer: "Violate." Bogatin: "Violate Title 26 U.S. Code, Section 7202, by filing . . . ' Bogatin's lawyer: "Failing."

Bogatin's lawyer also had to help him another time, correcting the word "exist" to the word "excise." Bogatin said he told his lawyer the moment he signed the agreement: "I don't have this kind of money."

Shortly afterward, Bogatin, free on bond awaiting sentencing, began a series of trips to Austria. He denies he intended to flee, contending the trips were designed to help members of his family leave the Soviet Union. His brother Yakov, a highly trained physicist, had been barred from emigrating because he held a key job in the Soviet defense

industry. Bogatin was in contact with the CIA at one point to see if it could help get his brother out.

(In the end, Yakov did come out of the Soviet Union in 1987. Bogatin has brought all his brothers and sisters to the U.S. as well as his mother and later his father's remains so the elder Bogatin could be buried in a family plot.)

On his fourth trip to Austria, in May 1987, Bogatin was arrested by Austrian police on charges he received money from a bank flimflam in London. He later said he had given his bank account number to a man who owed him money and that the man used it without his permission to wire in funds from a British bank fraud.

It took months for Bogatin to clear himself. Meanwhile, he was jailed in Austria.

The U.S. government seemed to ignore him. In fact, Bogatin met with a team of Justice Department lawyers, including the head of the organized crime strike force, to discuss returning in November 1987 but he still refused to return, and no extradition request was made.

After he left for Austria, violence began to stalk the gasoline scam in New York: One Russian was strangled in 1987, and Markowitz, who made a deal with the prosecutors, was shot to death in 1989. Iorizzo disappeared for many years but is now reported to be in Bel-

Even Franzese made a deal with the government, quit the mob, wrote his book and has testified in one major case, the prosecution of Norby Walters, the sports agent.

Bogatin has expressed no fear about his safety, but he is quick to assert he would never agree to help U.S. government agents in their investigation.

When Bogatin arrived in Austria in 1987, he says, he had "maybe \$100,000, maybe less." Yet the next spring, he made his first investment in Poland, opening Sunpol Holding Co. a firm that made candy and later sold frozen fruit and clothing. U.S. Justice Department agents have long suspected Austria is a cash stash. It was in Austria, Franzese's co-author Dary Matera reported, that the agents seized a great deal of Iorizzo's money.

Bogatin denies that money from U.S. tax evasion was used in any of his Polish investments. He said that to start the bank, which he estimates cost him \$10 million, he sold a house near San Francisco, borrowed from a lawyer in New York and used some profits from

The result is the First Commer-

cial Bank, started in Lublin, ancient capital of 16th Century Poland's Lublin Union, the Slavic empire that ran from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. More recent history is grim. It was the site of Majdanek, the second-largest concentration camp in Poland, where Nazis murdered 360,000 men, women and children, most of them Jewish.

The city center of Lublin is little changed since World War I: Hapsburg-era buildings face gritty streets in a town so gray and depressing that as one American visitor said, "Anybody with a 40watt bulb could be king."

The bank, known in Lublin as the "American bank" because Bogatin is from America, looks like it is on a temporary visit from Beverly Hills, with marble floors, chandeliers, Scandinavian interior decoration and bank employees dressed in dove-gray business suits. A network of IBM personal computers handles all bank operations, and what possibly are Poland's first automatic teller machines stand ready to be attached and put into operation.

"It's like the West—I've never been there but I assume it's what you have in the West," said customer Ryszard Mastalerz, 40.

Many people ask why Bogatin, a Jew, would open a bank in place of such somber history for Jews. Barbara Rudzinska, the bank's spokeswoman, said Bogatin's decision to come to Lublin near the old Soviet border has set him up to provide banking services to Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus and Russia.

In January, Gazeta Wyborcza, a prominent Polish newspaper born out of the Solidarity movement, reported that the bank's application to sell stock on the Polish stock exchange was in error.

It wrote that the bank claimed it had capital of 450 billion zlotys (\$40 million to \$45 million, depending on the exchange rate) when in fact it had only 70 billion (\$6 million).

Bogatin said that was an error made by Polish authorities who misread what the bank hoped to raise with investments already made. This was followed by a dispatch from Gazeta Wyborcza's Washington correspondent that Bogatin was wanted in the U.S.

It was not until after Bogatin had become big news in Poland that U.S. authorities moved for his immediate arrest and extradition.

Bogatin never disguised his name or filed misleading information about his background in Poland, and had visited the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw.

The news touched off a run on the bank: Frightened depositors withdrew some \$4.5 million.

Bogatin kept the bank open until a.m. and talked to the crowd, trying in broken Polish and Russian to reassure his customers. "We pay to everybody who wants to take money, we pay all banks. . . So this should be best proof for government and for authorities, bank is strong, bank is good," he said in an interview.

The bank offered high-interest bonuses for customers who reopened their accounts, and raffled cars, stereos and computers to entice customers. As a result, the bank has kept the bulk of its deposits, according to Bogatin's asso-

"We as a nation don't have that much experience with foreigners who have good intentions. Poles think their only goal is to cheat us, make money and run," said Teresa Litak, 59, while standing in a teller's line. She kept money in the bank only because her son persuaded her to.

"My son is of the new generation—that you shouldn't panic to solve your problems," she said. "But you have to realize that Poland just stepped out of a system that gave us no trust. People didn't trust, and that's coded permanently in our minds."

Bogatin and his associates are convinced Poland seeks to extradite him for its own purposes, not the United States'.

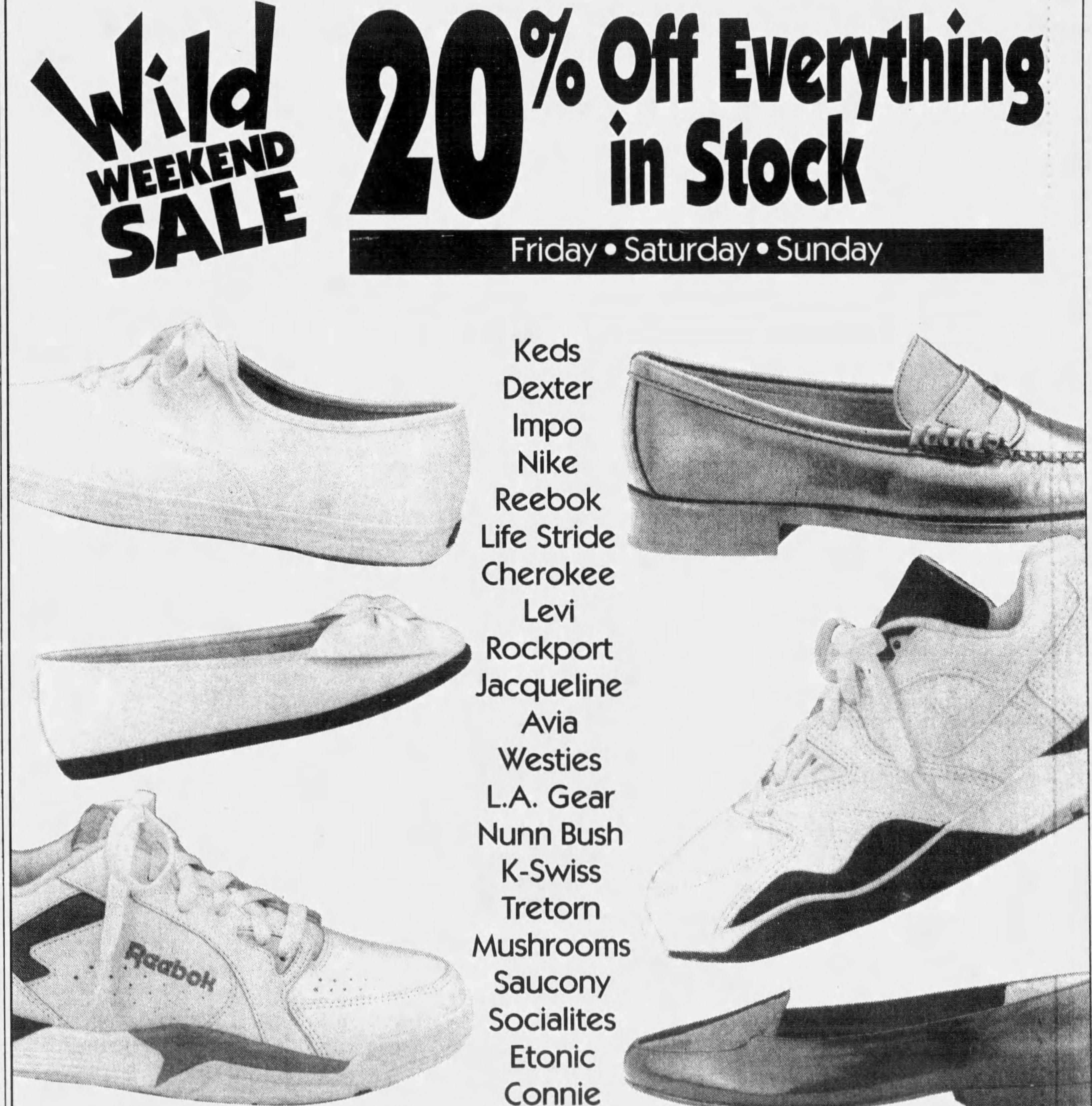
One may be fear of frauds. Lech Grobelny, a Pole, opened a bank shortly after Poland began its transformation to capitalism. After attracting thousands of depositors with high-interest rates he disappeared—along with the savings of many customers.

Banking officials here, like Rumowska, readily concede that the government naively allowed banks to open, even when authorities knew nothing about the people who opened them.

Others suggest that Bogatin and other foreigners might be a convenient scapegoat for a government that has been unable to relieve the country's dismal economic crisis.

Possibly, some suggest, it is his heritage—Russian and Jewish that earned the animosity of Poles. "The Poles didn't want to see a Russian Jew end up controlling the country's biggest bank," said one longtime friend.

Polish authorities have been scrutinizing Bogatin's banking and business operations for four months, but admit they can find no wrongdoing.



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