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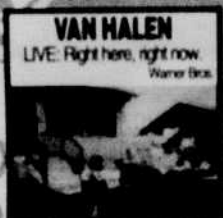
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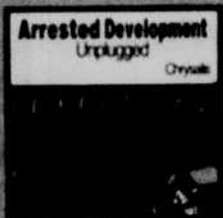
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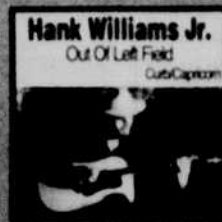
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Ex-Blazer recalls days of fights

(AP) — PORTLAND Think the NBA is tough these days with a list of fines and violence that looks like a police blotter?

Forget it. This is wimpy stuff compared to what used to go on night after night.

The authority for that is Kermit Washington, who scored the most famous — or infamous — knockout in league history when he decked Rudy Tomjanovich in a game 16 years ago.

"In my time, everywhere you went, there was somebody there to hit you," Washington said. "I wasn't one of the toughest. I just tried to survive. Today, there's a lot of woofin' going on. It's a different world now."

Washington is among Thursday's inductees at the GTE Academic All-America Hall of Fame. A graduate of American University, he is one of just seven players to average more than 20 points and 20 rebounds per game for his college career.

In the NBA, Washington was a workmanlike player for nine years, a rugged presence under the boards at 6-foot-8, 230 pounds. His basketball ability never gets mentioned, though. His KO of Tomjanovich always does.

"I was an average player," said Washington, who now hosts a radio talk show in Portland and is president of a company marketing fitness and conditioning gear. "I could have lasted longer if I didn't play injured. In my day, if you could walk, you played. I probably wouldn't be remembered, though, if not for the Tomjanovich thing."

The Tomjanovich thing occurred Dec. 9, 1977 in Los Angeles when a brawl broke out during a game between Houston and the Lakers. Out of the corner of his eye, Washington saw Tomjanovich running toward him. In the wild west spirit of shoot first and ask questions later, Washington landed a haymaker, never suspecting the guy on the run was trying to make peace.

Tomjanovich suffered a fractured skull, broken nose and cracked eye socket. Washington was fined \$10,000 — an enormous sum in those days — and suspended for 60 days.

"It was bad judgment," Washington said, "a mistake I paid for and continue to pay for. Here is a guy running at you and you don't know why. You

feel threatened. You act."

Just like today's NBA.

"Are you kidding?" Washington said. "This is tame compared to what went on then. It was a half-court game in those days, much more dangerous. These guys are not dangerous. They are non-threatening entities."

Bill Laimbeer, fined three times this season for a total of \$26,000, not threatening? How about Charles Oakley, fined \$10,000 for a flagrant foul? Or Shaquille O'Neal, also assessed \$10,000 for throwing a punch?

They don't scare Washington.

"The guys I played with put you in the hospital," he said. "I remember Willis Reed beating up the whole Laker team and Bill Bridges beating up the whole Seattle team. This is nothing. One time, Adrian Dantley went into the locker room to get Dave Meyers.

"Detroit with Bob Lanier. Guys like Lonnie Shelton, Maurice Lucas, Paul Silas, Clifford Ray, Truck Robinson. You didn't mess with Dave Cowens or even little Calvin Murphy. They'd beat you to death. Everybody had tough guys. You feared for your life. We had monsters."

Washington thinks today's spats get more attention because television is everywhere, watching every game. "We played in privacy," he said. "You'd hit somebody, maybe get fined \$250, and that was it."

Don't get him wrong. Washington believes there are players — he named Karl Malone and Charles Barkley — who would fit into the old knockdown, drag-out style of the league.

"Today's players are aggressive and they're more talented," he said. "But they're not tough. The game is better, more entertaining. These guys are so good."

And when the woofin' turns serious, Washington has some advice.

"If you walk away, your career is over," he said. "If you don't retaliate, you can pack your lunch and go home. If you sit back figuring the league will take care of it, forget about it. The only thing that holds the other guy back is if he knows you'll come back at him."

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Competition rules:

- 1 Prize competition is open to all currently enrolled University of Oregon undergraduates.
2. Each contestant may submit only one story and/or up to five poems. Fiction entries must be no longer than 5000 words. Entries must be typewritten, double-spaced (not poetry), on one side of 8 1/2 x 11 paper, and delivered to the Creative Writing Program Office, 341 PLC. Include your name, address, phone number and student ID number on the first page; all succeeding pages must be numbered and must include only your student ID number. Please note "KIDD PRIZE" on all delivered entries. Entries must be received on or before **Friday, May 7, 1993**. Entrants should retain a copy of any submission. **Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a sufficiently stamped self-addressed envelope.**
3. Three winners will be selected in each genre for overall literary excellence. Final judges will be the novelist Frederick Busch and Creative Writing Program Director Garrett Hongo. The prizes will be awarded on May 28, 1993 by Mr. Busch at his public reading in Gerlinger Lounge. The decision of the judges is final; winner(s) may not be chosen if in the judges' discretion no entries merit award.