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# Vendor voices: Have you felt profiled by police?

**BY HELEN HILL**  
STAFF WRITER

The Oregonian reported on June 27 that 52 percent of all arrests last year in the Portland area were made against people on the streets, and 86 percent of those were for non-violent violations. Many of those arrests were for low-level violations, often aggravated by homelessness.

The numbers for 2018 are currently outpacing those from 2017. Portland's homeless population is composed of a disproportionately large number of African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic and the elderly.

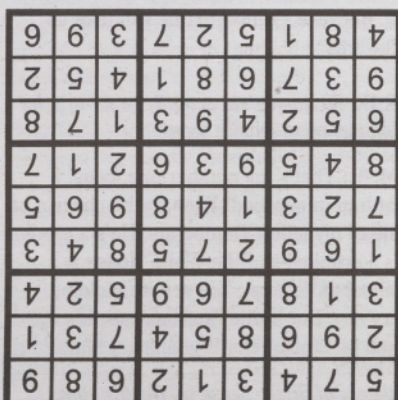
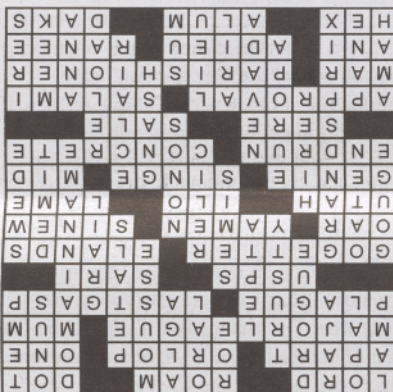
Street Roots recently asked our vendors about their first-hand experiences with law enforcement, specifically if they have ever felt profiled or harassed by the police. Here are some of their responses.



STREET ROOTS PHOTO

Above, vendor Paulette Bade at work at Sixth Avenue in Downtown Portland.

## Answers to Page 15 Puzzles



"I was staying at Portland Rescue Mission in January, it was cold, I was waiting for food to open up. I found a warm air vent and was standing by it. A Portland policeman came by and said I can't be standing there. I said 'This is a public sidewalk.' He got irritated and said 'I can arrest you for your attitude.' So I said 'You mean you will take me somewhere warm and safe and serve me food?' I held my hands out and said, 'Let's go. Cuff me.' He realized he was in over his head, talking to someone who knew his rights, and he walked away."



**Dennis Chavez**

Dennis Chavez  
Portland Art Museum

"Last week I was taking a breather, sitting on a public parking lot curb. Cop came up and asked for my ID, ran my name. He took me to jail because I have two warrants for illegal camping. They were so full they set me loose after six hours. We have to be careful where we camp. I feel totally profiled by cops and storeowners. I try to stay clean-looking, you don't want to lose the little bit you have. You gotta watch your back all the time. This place (Street Roots) is a blessing."

- Todd W. Starbucks on MLK Jr. Boulevard

"If you look scruffy, you get profiled. I had to leave my student ID on the table in the library when I went to PSU because the students were always calling the cops on me, so many times, they would come and it got so bad. You can't change the way you look."

- Chris Van Dam  
Hollywood Trader Joe's

"Are you serious? All my life people are

watching me, thinking I'm shoplifting, committing a crime. If you are white, they don't watch you like that. Things haven't changed at all. Not one bit."

- Francine

"I haven't personally been profiled, but I watch the police circle the block where I sell 10-15 times, such a police presence there where there are lots of homeless. They are circling constantly."

- Kerry Anderson  
10th Avenue and Columbia Boulevard



**Kerry Anderson**

"New York is even worse. It's nicer here. I try not to do things that gather attention. I don't linger. Police came up on me one Sunday, it was 4:30 a.m. I'd left the shelter to have a smoke. They silhouetted me against the wall. I knelt down, put my hands on my head. They didn't take me in, but I was nervous for an hour after that."

- George McCarthy  
Walgreens, Northeast Grand Avenue



**Cory McKelvey**

"I definitely feel profiled. When I sleep outside, Clean & Safe (security officers) wake me up and I have mere minutes to get all my stuff together before they call the police, but I have to urinate. I said I need to go to the bathroom and they said no, they were going to take all my stuff. Once they threw me down on a car because I urinated at the base of a tree because I just woke up and they didn't give me time. I tried to walk away but they

sent two patrol cars after me and arrested me for indecent exposure."

- Cory McKelvey  
Laughing Planet on North Mississippi Avenue

"The bike cops are running everyone's names at the tents on 6th. They are harassing people who don't look normal, some are trying to fight back."

- Allen Butera  
Lloyd Center Green Zebra

"I see it. Usually happens before tourist season when they try to clean up the town. One day I was sitting on a bench and they took my name down, I felt like they were harassing me. Seems like they go for people of a certain color, with backpacks, dirty, maybe they have a dog. I'm homeless but I try not to look homeless."

- Michone Nettles  
Northwest Sixth Avenue and Taylor Street

"There's a difference between homeless that are year round versus homeless traveling through when the weather is nice. The travelers travel up from the West Coast starting about now, they camp and party and leave needles everywhere. They are thieves. It makes all of us look bad. Police and city park rangers come and sweep. They know where they are."

- Kevin Harrison  
Southwest Clay and Park Streets

"When you are homeless and carrying your bags around, you feel you are being watched. I was over by Burnside Projects and police would drive by and ask for ID, run my name. It's very scary because you know you are not wanted for anything but they still question you all the time."

- Paulette Bade  
Southwest Salmon and Park Streets