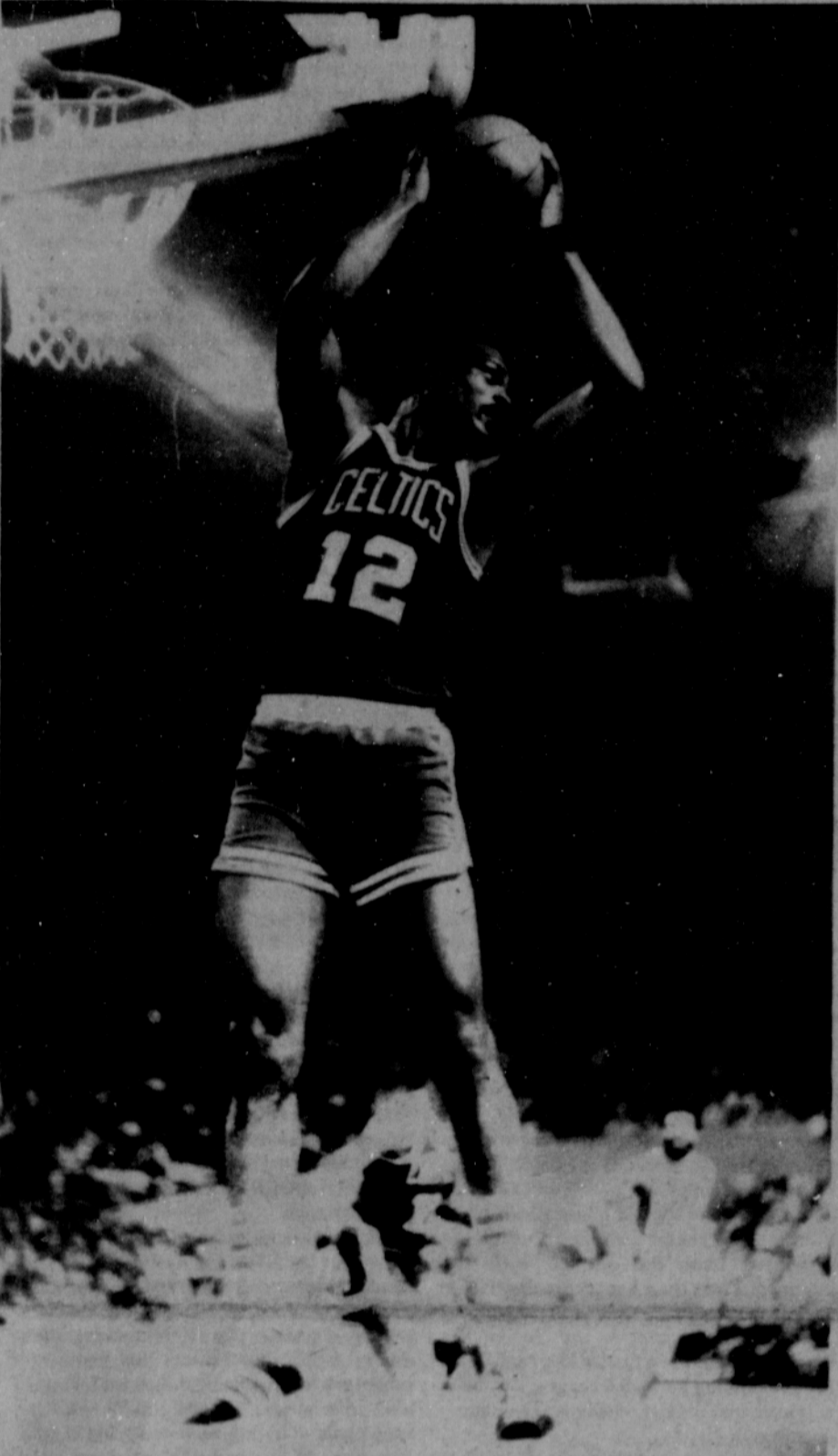


Sidney Wicks: Glad to be gone



SIDNEY WICKS

photo: Roger Derband

by Ron Sykes

Tuesday night the Boston Celtics invaded the Memorial Coliseum for their first appearance in Portland for the year and, naturally, it marks the first appearance of ex-Blazer star Sidney Weeks.

Weeks spent five stormy years in Portland - years in which he was cheered and, at times, heavily booed. Weeks had a problem... and that problem was that he was good, a superstar.

In some places that might be considered a plus, but not in Portland. Coach Tom Meschery, last year, openly admitted that ours is a red-neck city. And that is one of the problems Black players must deal with here.

Anyway, Wicks is good and for this one day... he's back. The local media has really treated Wicks quite harshly and when his trade was finalized... treated him even worse (if that is possible). As a result, Wicks has constantly refused to talk with the local media.

Yours truly, however, was able to talk at length with Wicks. When I contacted him earlier in the year, he said to call when the Celtics arrived in town.

So Tuesday afternoon I rung the Hilton and asked the desk clerk for Wicks' room. I was immediately connected and somewhat surprised to hear a totally unfamiliar voice. My first thought was, "Oh, Oh, she's given me the wrong room." After identifying myself, this mysterious voice, one obviously disguised, said, "Ron, this is Sidney Wicks".

After greetings were passed we got down to the business of our interview. My first question was the obvious: How does it feel coming back to Portland?

Wicks replied, "No emotion. I was here five years and now I'm gone. When I play Portland it will be no different that playing anyone else. I'll just play my game and try to do my best, nothing else." Wicks, while in Portland, played his game making the All-Star Team four consecutive years and only missing last year when Lenny Wilkins decided to change a 6-9 strong forward to a small, ballhandling forward. This caused Wicks some problems in adjusting, mainly ball-handling.

If you will, picture Maurice Lucas leading the Blazer fast break instead of his usual role of rebounding and kicking it out. Can he do it? Now, perhaps you can see how Wicks felt when suddenly he was thrust into that position.

Are the Boston fans any different than (Please turn to page 2 col. 1)

NAACP installs officers

Reverend John H. Jackson will be installed as President of the NAACP, Portland Branch on Sunday, January 9th. Jackson was elected by the membership on December 12th, to the position vacated by Ellis Casson. Casson served three two-year terms as President.

Mrs. Gladys McCoy, State Ombudsman, and member of the Portland School Board, will install the president, officers and members of the executive board.

The service will be held at 6:00 pm at Mount Olivet Church, N.E. First and Schyler. A reception will follow the installation service and the public is invited to attend.

Schools seek new funds

The Portland Public Schools are asking for a \$9.6 million per year operating levy for four years, beginning July 1, 1977 and ending June 30, 1981.

A special election, January 11th, has been called to allow district residents to vote on this levy. Oregon law requires that any increase over six per cent must be approved by the voters.

The purpose of the levy is to continue operation of the schools at the current level. The two-year special operating levy of \$6 million per year that was approved by the voters on January 28, 1975, will end June 30, 1977. The new levy would replace that one and increase it by \$3.6 million per year.

According to school spokesmen the levy would continue current programs, with the increased costs brought about by inflation, and would allow long-range planning since the schools would be assured of operating costs for four more years.

It is estimated that the increased cost would amount to 56c on each \$1,000 assessed evaluation, or \$11.20 more taxes per year on a \$20,000 home.

If the levy passes, the operating funds cannot be used for buildings.

NAACP deposits

V. F. Booker, President of American State Bank, has received a check for \$40,000 from the National Office of the NAACP for deposit in ASB. Deposits such as this, while earning interest for the depositor, provide funds that can be invested in the community, Booker explained.



John Craig, owner of Complete Gardening Service, inspects trees that his company will plant at the Portland Mall. (Photo: Ancil Nance)

Craig wins Mall contract

John Craig of Complete Gardening Service has been awarded a \$170,000 contract for planting trees on the Portland Mall.

The award was made on a competitive bid, let by Hensel Phelps Construction Company, the general contractor on the \$11 million job.

Craig has been involved in landscaping, landscape maintenance and construction for twenty-five years.

Among the larger projects Craig has been involved with are O'Bryant Square, Federal Building, Fort Vancouver, the Swan Island Coast Guard Station, Crown Zellerbach, and sewage treatment plants at Bonneville and Woodlawn, Washington.

In 1974, he won an award from the American Association of Nurserymen for his participation in the development of

the downtown plan.

The first sixty trees designated for the Portland Mall are London Plane (Platanus Acerifolia), which are from eighteen to twenty feet tall with a four inch diameter trunk. The trees will grow to a height of about sixty feet in 35 years.

The trees will be planted with special deep watering pipes to encourage deep rooting. The trees will be planted lower than usual to counteract surface root travel.

When the mall planting is completed, there will be a total of 209 London Planes, 64 Red Maple Autumn Flames, and 14 Red Maple Armstrongs.

According to the contractor, subcontracts and service contracts to minority contractors will total about \$500,000 when the mall is completed. Craig's contract is the largest to go to a minority firm.

The end of a dream?

"As I put the key in my car door, I looked back at the place where I'd just spent the last sixteen months of my life. The name of it was 'Conquest Center', an alcohol and drug rehabilitation program. I'd seen some hard, hard days in this program. At times it took everything I had in me just to stay here. (Once I did leave, I called back and after hours and hours and hours and hours and hours and hours of talking to me, I finally came back, three days later.) But there were good times here too, real good times. I remember the hard times more so only because these were the times that these rare and dedicated people were working on me (and me on myself) to change my ways and give my life a new direction. Standing there looking at the center, I was trying to remember all the things I had learned and had been taught while I was here. But at this moment it was impossible, because it is unbelievable the amount of teaching Brother Gerry Sanders, the director, and his staff had

"I remembered all the groups I'd been put through. Then after I'd gotten my head somewhat together and became a leader in the program myself, I remembered all the groups I'd put new residents through, trying to give them what I'd been given."

This was the first day of James "Babe" Wilson's new life. While at Conquest Center and during a three month stint as a drug counselor at the Veteran's Methadone Program in Seattle, Wilson had decided that he wanted to be a drug rehabilitation counselor.

Although he was offered employment in Seattle, Wilson determined to return to Portland and try to help some of the people he had known. "I just wanted them to see that a person could change if he really wanted to and was willing to put poared into me hour after hour, day after day for the last sixteen months - things that I didn't even begin to know about myself and things about a drug addict's addictive personality.

some effort and hard work into it. I just wanted to shout and tell them, 'Look at me. I'm living proof. I wanted to be their 'role model'. That was my dream."

As he left Conquest Center, Wilson was given some advice by Grother Gerry. First, "One fix is too many, and a thousand ain't enough." Next, "Babe, it's going to be a good ten years before the police or anyone who knew you before you came to Conquest will believe that you have changed."

When he returned to Portland in February of 1975, Wilson was employed by the state's CODA (Comprehensive Options for Drug Abusers) program. He spent most of his time counselling at Alpha House, a therapeutic program that houses and provides counselling for drug abusers. He also counselled and advised drug abusers who were before the courts, often directing them into drug programs and preventing their being sentenced to prison. One of his functions was visiting drug users in Rocky Butte.

"I knew that a person with a past like mine very seldom if ever got the chance that I now had, helping drug dependent people in their struggle to try and change their lives. Keeping this and so many other things I'd learned in mind, I kept on pushing myself. Man, you know I was doing it, you know, really making it."

"By now I also knew I could do the job that I so badly wanted and needed to do - not because people were telling me I was doing it, but because deep down in my own gut, I knew it. Working in a therapeutic community is a hard, hard job, but this is what I needed for me."

Wilson was considered to be one of the best counsellors in the drug program - not only because of his personal interest but because of a natural ability to relate to others. A recent evaluation by the Program Executive said, "His expertise and genuineness make him an important therapeutic influence on the program."

On November 26th, Wilson was arrested at Rocky Butte Jail and accused of

"criminal activity in drugs" and "supplying contraband" - 2.86 grams of heroin.

At his arraignment hearing, the director of the District Attorney's Career Criminal Division personally appeared in court and asked that Wilson be kept off the streets, indicating that he will be treated as a "career criminal" although he has not served time in the penitentiary. His only previous convictions were the drug charge that sent him to Conquest House in 1973 and an earlier charge of selling marijuana, which resulted in a sentence to Oregon Correctional Institution.

Next the District Attorney's office went to Judge Richard Burke, who had sent Wilson to Conquest Center and had at the same time given him five years bench probation, and had him issue a probation violation warrant to keep Wilson in jail. Judge Robert Jones has said he will arrange a third party release for Wilson if Judge Burke will release the parole violation warrant.

In the meantime, Wilson was kept in maximum security at Rocky Butte until a few days ago. He was told first that this was for his own protection, and later that it was to prevent his contact with other inmates.

Wilson says he is innocent. His friends - including counsellors he worked with in CODA recipients of the program - believe he is innocent. Some place their confidence in him because of his own actions - the way he has been able to help others. Others are aware that had he wished, Wilson could have returned to big time dealing and never would have taken such a risk as to take drugs into a jail. "Those who really know he is innocent are the ones who are still in drugs and know he has gone straight."

Some of Wilson's friends believe he was set up. They do not know why - perhaps because the police really believe he is still dealing in drugs. "They watch him all the time - circle his house - sit in (Please turn to page 2 col. 4)

Ride - A - Long gives inside view

By Jack Rubbeck

From their expression, you could tell what the two young girls were thinking: "Wonder what they arrested him for. We'd better not get too close." It was a look I was to see on several faces during the next 4 hours as I sat in the back, or "cage", of the police car.

Actually, though, it wasn't a case of them catching up with me at last, instead, I was taking part in the Portland Police Department's "Ride-Along" program. This program gives John Q. Public an opportunity to see for him (or her)self how the police carry out their mission of enforcing the laws and protecting the people of the community.

My ride started one Saturday at 3:45 PM when I reported in at East Precinct. The deskman led me around to the back through a rabbit-warren of partitioned offices where a sergeant assigned a young officer to show me through the building.

Next, I was taken to the locker room and introduced to the officer I

would be riding with. His name was Dan. At 4:00 p.m. we went to the squad room for roll call. Here the officers gather at the beginning of the shift while a sergeant calls roll, gives assignments and reads the various Teletypes (telling of wanted subjects, "hot" cars, etc.) that have come in.

After roll call we checked out our patrol car and took off. Most police districts are pretty large and Dan's is no exception. It runs from S.E. Division to Holgate and from 42nd to 72nd. That's a lot of territory for one man to cover and sometimes the patrolman who has a neighboring district will park his car on a service-station lot and join Dan for a while to see how things shape up. That happened this time so I was relegated to the back seat. This "cage" is a bad place to be if you have claustrophobia as all door and window handles are missing and the only way you can get out is to be let out. There is also a heavy sheet of shatterproof glass between the front and back seats and, in this car, numerous scratches on it showed that some earlier

"guests" hadn't really appreciated their ride.

Our first two calls were for "family disturbances". In one the husband was supposedly throwing chairs at his wife. In each case Dan told me I'd better stay in the car. Since I had no choice in the matter, being in the cage, I agreed. Of course, I could easily see his point since he was responsible for my safety. After these calls (which didn't amount to much) we went to a drive-in for coffee. We had just taken the first sip when we got another call. Dan says such timing is all too typical. So away we went to where a disturbance was said to be occurring. It didn't amount to anything either but another call wasn't long in coming. It was for a fight outside a tavern. We (and three other cars) sped to the scene and found that the "fight" was really just a loud argument between two friends (who had each oversampled the tavern's products) about who had called for a cab. Some fight.

We then took the other officer back to his car and I can't say I was sorry to see him go. Sitting in that cage almost had

me feeling playing the part and growling at someone.

In the front seat I had a better chance to ask Dan some questions about policemen, and their jobs. One interesting fact is that their probationary period is 1 1/2 years. They get 2 weeks of vacation for 5 years service or less and 3 weeks after that. If they work a holiday they get 12 hours of comp time and if the holiday falls on their off day they get 8 hours comp. They get frequent updates on changes in criminal laws but are more or less on their own on civil laws. Police candidates must undergo a thorough psychiatric examination and 2 years of college is required at the start and more as they go along.

Our next call was to take a report on an attempted burglary. It was a small house and the young couple living in it had returned home to find a glass pane broken in the back door and the door standing open. Their return had apparently frightened the intruders away and nothing had been taken. They were lucky, for when asked if they had their name, SSN or driver's license number

marked on their valuables such as stereo, TV, etc., or a list of their serial numbers they said "no." The items would thus have been nearly impossible to trace if they had been stolen. Have you taken any of these precautions yet?

We were on 39th at Powell and the light had just turned green for us when a VW went zipping through the red light on Powell. "That's twelve" said Dan as he whipped around the corner, blue light flashing, and pulled the car over. After the driver had been given his ticket and we were rolling again I asked the question most of us have asked at one time or another: Is there a quota? The answer is...yes. It is 12 tickets per month. The main purpose is so the officer will not go stale on traffic laws, which are more often enforced by the Traffic Division. The reasoning is that an officer will surely see at least 12 "good" (meaning bad) traffic offenses (such as excessive speed, running a red light, etc.) in a month's time. It makes sense. You or I often see that many on our way to work each day.

We were rolling along on 50th avenue

when Dan pointed to the car in front of us. There were several young people in it and one in the back seat was acting in a slightly odd manner: he kept bopping around. On went the blue light again, the car pulled over and Dan went to investigate. He came back a few minutes later smiling and shaking his head. It seems that the occupants were transporting samples of some sort in an ice chest which was taking up most of the back seat space. The unfortunate guy in back was finding it rather difficult to remain in one place for any length of time!

It was after 8 PM so I told Dan I was ready to return to the station. I could have stayed the whole 8-hour shift but I had other plans, and besides, I didn't want to wear out my welcome.

So, what did I get from my ride and was it worth it? Well, I believe I now have a much better understanding of our police department and, yes, it was well worth doing. I was quite impressed with the openness I encountered. Both in the precinct and in the car all the questions I (Please turn to page 2 col. 5)