

EDITORIAL / OPINION

EDITORIAL

The Real Drug Pushers

It appears that every waking morning we hear something new and negative about the Reagan administration. Yesterday it was the Contras. Today it is Panama. The issue is drugs.

When Congress recently voted to deny military aid to the Nicaraguan Contras, rumor had it that the Reagan administration was in dire need of another issue to dangle before the American people. Now, according to print and broadcast media, America may be close to landing the big one — General Manuel Antonio Noriega — military leader of Panama.

Sworn testimony has revealed allegations about secret operations by American, Panamanian and Cuban agencies in Central America. The allegations place drug smuggling at the center of the operations. Last week, General Noriega was indicted by a Miami grand jury on charges of money laundering and drug smuggling to the United States.

Believing that any man or woman is innocent until proven guilty, it is unwise to pass judgement about Noriega's guilt or innocence. However, if it is true that he did smuggle drugs into the United States, the American government should take specific action.

African-Americans are keeping close tabs on the situation. Throughout America, African-American communities have suffered the ravages of drugs and drug addiction. Each year, thousands of young African-Americans fall prey to a variety of drugs that weren't produced in their communities. Each year, thousands of African-American babies are born drug addicts and have to go through the pain of physical, psychological and emotional withdrawal. Each year, hundreds of African-Americans die from drug overdose.

Now, as the media continues to look into the drug dealings of Noriega, African-Americans are wondering if he is one of those responsible for much of the drugs that kill, maim and injure our people.

African-Americans are also wondering "how much did the CIA know and to what extent did it participate in drug trafficking to the United States?"

The CIA's alleged involvement points to another dark area of U.S. foreign policy. How, African-Americans ask, can the U.S. government say it is dedicated to wiping out drugs from U.S. communities, and, at the same time, support a government that is alleged to have served as a drug pipeline to this country?

It is too early to say to what extent America is involved with the exploits of General Noriega. It is too early to say whether or not Noriega is guilty as charged. But one thing is clear, something is terribly wrong in Panama.

If Noriega is guilty, his bank accounts should be seized and the money used to establish drug treatment centers for the many millions of addicts walking the streets of America. African-American communities should be first in line. In the past, when it came to drug treatment, African-American communities were treated as if they were growing, harvesting and distributing drugs. The U.S. government can make amends by giving this suggestion some serious consideration.

African-Americans are tired of taking the blame for others. It is now important to call a fork a fork, a spoon a spoon, and a crook a crook. If Noriega turns out to be a crook, then he should be treated as one. He should also be brought to the United States, if he's guilty, and forced to spend time amongst the misery and suffering of the drug addict. He should be forced to visit the families and relatives of addicts who perished because they couldn't kick the habit. He should be forced to attend the funerals of those who have overdosed.

The drugs that come into the African-American community come through a pipeline. Law enforcement agencies in many American cities claim they are helpless to do anything concrete, so these particular communities continue to suffer and decay. Businesses move out. Citizens move out. Criminals move in and the problem escalates.

However, for years African-Americans have charged that the bulk of the drugs that end up in their communities are there by design — sent there through an invisible pipeline.

Listening to the evidence on Noriega, the African-American community just might have their finger on one visible source. If so, public outcry should be deafening; particularly in the African-American community. African-Americans should get totally involved with what's happening in Panama. African-Americans should prepare to make their own judgements on Noriega after the evidence has been presented. But more importantly, African-Americans should demand justice.

We can no longer afford to ignore these situations and pass them off as "none of our business." They are our business. As long as one fiber of drug comes into the African-American community from a drug pipeline, or any other pipeline, it is our business.

If our children are our business, then the elimination of drugs from our communities is definitely our business.

Keep your eye on Noriega.

Civil Rights Journal

Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.

Howard Beach is Everywhere

The attention of the nation has been focused in recent days on the verdict handed down in the Howard Beach case. For more than a year, Howard Beach has seemed the epitome of racially motivated violence. The image of a hoard of white youths chasing three African American men through the streets like dogs, until finally forcing one of them to his death, seemed the ultimate horror.

However, no African American in this country is exempt from racially motivated violence — not even African American police officers. A recent case in Prince George's County, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, D.C., has proven this all too clearly. The county, which has a long history of racist violence, has a steadily increasing African American population. However, the police force still remains predominantly white.

On December 14, 1987, James L. Gordon, an African American member of the Washington, D.C., police force, was shot to death in his own home by a white policeman from Prince George's County. Gordon, 40 years old, was a 17-year veteran of the D.C. police force. The white officer, Cpt. Robert Raimond, though only 27 years old, had already been cited twice for police brutality in Prince George's County. In one case the complainant was awarded a \$4,400 judgement against Raimond for use of unnecessary force in a traffic case. But Cpt. Raimond was cleared by a police trial board and so he remained on the force.

Last month Raimond was allegedly investigating a suspected burglary in the home of Officer Gordon, the Black officer. Officer Gordon had recently arrived home. When the Black officer moved towards a window in his own home, the white officer shot him through the window. The white officer claimed he thought he saw a gun in Gordon's hand. Officer Gordon died a short time later, on the floor of his own home. A neighbor says the white officer never identified himself, but had only yelled, "Freeze."

When an ambulance with paramedics arrived the County police would not allow them to enter to treat Officer Gordon. County police claim other intruders might still be in the house. Then when five Washington, D.C., officers, including a

homicide lieutenant and a district commander, arrived on the scene, they were not allowed to remain in the house during the investigation. A Washington, D.C. police officer called the non-cooperation "highly irregular," adding, "[D.C. police] never turn away and investigator from another police unit."

Several Black police officers on the Washington, D.C. force have openly called the killing racially motivated. They suggest that because the house was located in the middle class neighborhood, and because it had a two-car garage that held Officer Gordon's Mercedes Benz, Cpl. Raimond assumed that the Black man he saw in the house could not be its owner. On a recent call-in program on a local Black radio station, some officers asked to be authorized to go in and get the white officer and bring him back to Washington, D.C. in order to ensure a fair trial.

The Gordon killing is not an isolated incident in the county. Back in December of 1986, Sir Kaylin Edwards, a 15-year-old Black youth, was repeatedly beaten by another white Prince George's County officer near a convenience store. The white officer accused the young man of littering. Eleven witnesses testified to the brutality. One shopper mentioned that the officer "kept saying 'pick up the wrapper' but each time he would keep shoving him back . . . [The officer] hit him at least 25 to 30 times." The driver of a car testified that the young man stumbled across the road in front of her and that the officer hit him "at least 10 times" with the nightstick and then began kicking him between his legs. A Prince George's County police trial board later agreed that the officer had used "excessive force."

Yes, Howard Beach is but a symbol. For there are Howard Beaches all over this nation. And given the present national climate, which condones racist violence through silence, these incidents will continue to grow unless we demand that justice be done — each and every time they occur.

Meanwhile three different investigations are now underway in the killing of Officer Gordon. His death sadly reminds us once again that, in the African American community, no one is exempt from the brutality and the fatality of racism.

The Civil Rights Journal, written by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., is a publication of the United Church of Christ.

Business Youth Exchange



Donald S. McClave at Business Youth Exchange press conference. Photo by Richard J. Brown

by Nyewusi Askari

On February 8, 1988, the Business Youth Exchange (BYE) held a press conference in the Portland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce board room to announce its accomplishments and to explain the 1988 business-led programs and initiatives to combat the high school dropout rate.

Participating were some of Portland's top chief executive officers: Roger L. Breezley, C.E.O., U.S. Bancorp; Donald S. McClave, Chamber President; Tom Nelson, BYE Director; James R. Owen, C.E.O. Code-A-Phone Corp.; and William K. Deshler, C.E.O., Electrical Construction Company.

The Portland Chamber of Commerce's Business Youth Exchange is a business-led group through which business has partnered with education and government to declare war on the dropout problem. In 1987, partnership programs assisted by BYE served 2,500 at-risk Portland students. According to the BYE, 92 percent of the students in its dropout prevention programs received their high school diplomas. Formed in 1983, BYE has worked as a catalyst to bring schools, government and business together to reverse the high dropout rate and inadequate preparation of the future workforce.

During the press conference, BYE leaders noted that "nearly 30 percent of all ninth graders in the State of Oregon do not graduate from high school." During the 1986-87 school year, 11,248 students dropped out of Oregon's high schools. During 1988, the Business Youth Exchange will contribute to the Governor's state-wide Student Retention Initiative by assisting business communities throughout Oregon in acting on their own dropout problems. The Exchange will also turn up the heat on businesses to expand their involvement in several nationally-acclaimed local programs.

According to Tom Nelson, Business Youth Exchange Director, "U.S. National Bank of Oregon, Code-A-Phone Corp. and Electrical Construction Co. are three of several dozen local companies leading the fight." Nelson said, "These companies help students develop the necessary skills to get good jobs through influencing public funding allocations, providing jobs and employees to staff mentor programs, and using resources to leverage improvement in employment preparation programs, which help with everything from interviewing skills to improvement in self-esteem."

An affiliate of the Portland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, The Business Youth Exchange highlighted its recent accomplishments:

- Co-founded the Leaders Roundtable, a group of community leaders presiding over the implementation of the Portland Investment, a 10-year, comprehensive K-12 plan to reduce dropouts and increase youth employability.
- Provided jobs and business resources to programs serving 2,500 young people in 1987.
- Graduated over 92% of at-risk students from the Partnership Project and Financial Academy, two school-based dropout prevention programs.
- Helped secure \$967,000 in competitive education, training and drug and alcohol funds for Multnomah and Washington Counties in 1987.
- Stimulated formation of Code-A-Phone and Health Options for Teens Programs at Marshall High School.
- Assisted in development of Pacific Northwest Bell's Registry program for high achieving minority students at Roosevelt, Jefferson and Grant High Schools.
- Institutionalized Partnership Project at Grant High School.

See "Business Youth" - Page 3

PORTLAND OBSERVER

OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLICATION
Established in 1970

Alfred L. Henderson / Publisher Leon L. Harris / Gen. Mgr./Controller

PORTLAND OBSERVER
is published weekly by Exie Publishing Company, Inc.
5011 N.E. 26th Ave.
Portland, Oregon 97211
P.O. Box 3137
Portland, Oregon 97208
Phone Number: (503) 288-0033

Richard J. Brown
Editor

Gary Ann Garnett
Business Manager

Nyewusi Askari
Writer

Richard J. Brown
Photographer

Mattie Ann Callier-Spears
Religion Editor

Leslie V. White
Art Director

Kendel Bryan Covington
Entertainment Editor

Vivian E. Richardson
Sales Representative

Joyce Washington
Sales Representative

Rebecca Robinson
Typesetter/Production

Arnold Pitre
Sales Representative

Fred Hembry
Sports

Lonnie Wells
Distribution

Deadlines for all submitted materials:
Articles: Monday, 5 p.m.; Ads: Tuesday, 5 p.m.

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if not accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Subscriptions: \$15.00 per year in the Tri-County area.

The PORTLAND OBSERVER - Oregon's oldest African American Publication - is a member of The National Newspaper Association - Founded in 1885, The Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., New York



Letters to the Editor

Hey, Y'll — I'm a 'Patriot', Too!

Editor:

Concerning "Who is Dr. Jamil Cherovee?", 2-3-88: I'm a real patriot, but I'm not a patriot necessarily to the founding fathers, but to the Founding Father of Creation. And, as long as I am patriotic to Him and His principles, I don't have to answer to anyone else. I'm just a voice in the wilderness, warning those in Authority and their advisors of the folly of their present course of action. I feel sorry for Amerika because so many people are so in love with their so-called leaders that they would not pull the coat when their coat needs pulling. They are so drunk off of false patriotism that they don't know that real patriotism is when you stand for the truth that Almighty God, the Father of all creation, has laid down as the criterion of judgement.

Your Bible, Brother Matthew Chavis, teaches us in the book of Ezekiel when you see a man in sin, warn the wicked. I do not care what you think of me — it is irrelevant, immaterial and baseless. But I must warn Amerika. I'm so glad that I live in Amerika. For I could not say what I'm saying in another country

on the earth. Amerika, with all her faults, is a great nation: Not great because she's good — I got into a lot of trouble over that word "great", you know (smile) — She's great because she is consequential. Amerika affects the entire world. This country can be a nation that leads the world to total ruin and destruction. Free speech guaranteed by the Constitution is a blessing. It is a blessing for me. It is a blessing to Amerika. But it could be Amerika's own undoing.

In Amerika you have the right to speak, but when you speak what others don't like, you have to pay a price. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X are good examples. So when you're willing to speak the truth you must also be willing to pay the price. I'm willing to pay the price even if it is death. It's a small price to pay to tell the truth and free the minds of the people.

Free speech can be Amerika's undoing — because I have the freedom to warn our so-called leaders and the American government. I have the freedom to warn Amerika, I have the freedom to warn Black people, and, if my warning is true and faithful to the Divine Word

found in the Bible, then it is not a warning from a foolish ex-slave; it is a warning coming from God to you with love and mercy.

Believe me, when I say so, Brother Matthew, I know I'm privileged to live in Amerika, and I know that I'm privileged to be able to tell the truth. And if you will hear the truth and be persuaded to act on the principles of truth, Amerika can be saved, and the world can save itself from a destructive fall. Sometimes you don't know from where the warning will come. But when you are arrogant and falsely proud, the warning comes from someone beneath you, or maybe from your child or a subordinate who sees you making a mistake and pulls your coat. You say, "Who are you to tell me? Don't you know who I am?" Yes, we know who you are. Fools like you existed in the past, and they now are gone.

All great republics have risen or fallen because of this incalculable error. I say "Freedom for the People in impartiality." Revise the Constitution where it penalizes merely for the satisfaction of stagnant carpet baggers of their "erudite South

Society". I say "Equality" instead of "Legality". The rise of the minority it thus inevitable. Down with tyranny.

Brother Matthew, I'm not rich, but I'm sharing the little knowledge I have with the people. Arrogance and false pride are heavy baggage. It weighs down the human spirit; it corrupts the processes of thinking; and allows the proud to misperceive reality and make tragic mistakes.

Everytime we go to a funeral and we see one of our loved ones placed in the ground, we say, "From the earth he or she came, from the dust he or she came, and to the earth and to the dust he or she now returns." Well, if my beginning was dust and my end is dust, how am I now more than dust?

If I'm wealthy, how much wealth do I possess? If I am knowledgeable, compare what I know to what is out there to know. If I have power, compare the power of any man to the powers of heaven and earth and ask yourself how much power do you have? It's dust. So when I write or speak, it's for the elevation of humanity.

Dr. Jamil Cherovee