

Ray Ray Winston

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Authority was concerned," Pitre now says of the teen-ager.

Why, then, was Winston evicted? The answer is not apparent from the court record. The original eviction order did not even mention the teen-ager.

On May 16, the Housing Authority notified Azzie Winston that it intended to evict her and her family from their Columbia Villa duplex by June 18. The original notice stated that the family was being evicted because Azzie Winston failed to keep several appointments to have her financial status re-evaluated. An annual financial re-evaluation is required of all Housing Authority tenants who are under age 62. The re-examination is used to help determine whether the tenants are earning too much money to stay in their publicly subsidized houses.

Azzie Winston went to Multnomah County Legal Aid to fight the eviction. From there, she was referred to Portland lawyer Frank Wall, who agreed to represent her in the proceedings, which took place before Multnomah County District Court Judge Dorothy Baker. On July 27, the parties agreed on a settlement that, among other things, required that Joseph Winston not stay overnight at his mother's house. The settlement is the first time the teen-ager's name appears in the court record.

According to Pitre, Azzie Winston volunteered, during a settlement hearing in Baker's chambers, to throw her son out of her house. "It was all agreed that it was her idea to remove her son," says Pitre.

But Pitre's statement is contradicted by Azzie Winston and her attorney. According to them, Pitre had made it clear before the settlement hearing that the Housing Authority wanted the teen-ager evicted. "It was pretty clear that if we were going to settle, those would be the terms," says Wall.

Judge Baker agrees. "They just wanted him out of there at night," she says. "The feeling I got was that he was a gang member, causing trouble at night."

Winston may have been a gang member, as Portland police believe. But Pitre may also have made a mistake in concluding that he was an active member of the Columbia Villa Crips. Pitre says that her assessment of Winston was based in large part on a KOIN news report, during which Winston was shown bragging about being a Crip. "He was saying sensational stuff, like, 'Crips don't die, they multiply,'" Pitre says of the report, which aired several months ago. "The media picked up on that."

In fact, KOIN says the self-proclaimed Crip member in the report was not Winston. According to reporter Richard Draper, several Columbia Villa residents recently reviewed a tape of the story Pitre cited. The residents all

agreed the admitted gang member in the story was not Winston.

The settlement took effect on Aug. 10, one week before Winston was killed. "In retrospect, maybe that wasn't the right decision," says Wall. "The settlement put him on the streets, which may have resulted in getting him shot."

Don Clark, the new director of the Housing Authority of Portland, is the first to admit that his agency needs to do more for its tenants. And Clark seems well-qualified to bring about such changes. Clark has a long record of public service, including several terms as Multnomah County sheriff and executive officer of the Multnomah County Commission. After leaving the commis-



sion, he served as head of Central City Coner, a private, non-profit agency providing a variety of services to the homeless in Old Town. At this time, the Housing Authority seems clearly in need of the multiservice approach that Clark supports.

Founded in 1941 to provide housing to shipyard workers during World War II, the agency has changed its role substantially in its 47 years. Now, it provides housing to approximately 15,000 low-income people in Portland and the unincorporated parts of Multnomah County. The agency has an annual budget of \$22 million, most of which comes from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. It operates or subsidizes 7,207 housing units, many of which are located in high-rise towers. Columbia Villa is easily the most controversial of the Housing Authority's projects, and it is here that the agency's current shortcomings are most readily apparent.

In recent months, the north Portland housing project has been portrayed as a haven for criminals. News stories have portrayed the project's residents as living in fear of roaming gangs and drug dealers, some of whom occasionally discharge firearms. But those problems are not immediately apparent to first-time visitors. The development is not a slum or a ghetto. Located between Houghton Street and Columbia Boulevard, the Villa is instead a large, peaceful-looking residential suburb. It houses approximately 1,200 people, half

of them children.

The Villa has 478 housing units, all built in the 1940s. The units are mostly small duplexes or modest two-story apartments, arranged in courtyards, with neatly trimmed lawns, large trees and conveniently located playgrounds. Most of the duplexes and apartments are located along a sweeping oval street made up of North Woolsey Ave. and North Woolsey Court. Each unit has a large sign next to the front door with its street number, giving the development the look of a campground or a forest retreat.

"It doesn't look like the kind of public housing projects they have in the East," says the Housing Authority's Pitre, referring to the high-rise tenements in many urban areas. "It's a nice place and can be a nice neighborhood."

But the key to understanding

life at Columbia Villa is not what the housing project has to offer. The key is what is missing.

Multnomah County maintains a health clinic and a parole and probation center at Columbia Villa. But beyond that there are few programs to serve the residents' needs. Several years ago, the Housing Authority closed the one facility that offered residents any kind of organized evening or weekend activities. The agency converted Columbia Villa's large community center into office space for the employees who administer the low-income housing program. Until then, the center had served as a location for social gatherings. "We used to have dances and things like Bluebirds in there, but we need the space," says Pitre.

Useni Perkins, president of the Portland Urban League, deplors the lack of resources available for troubled youth at the housing project. "We need to invest in more outreach access to counselors at the Villa without having to go downtown."

Clark agrees. Almost immediately after being named to head the housing authority, area manager, three assistants and seven resident aides. A summer employment project provided work for 20 teen-ager residents.

But Clark knows that much more is required. Although he is reluctant to talk about the future, Clark acknowledges that plans are under way to increase public services to Columbia Villa residents. He is currently working with the city and the county and apparently plans to lobby the 1989 Legislature for even more help. "There was a much more substantial government presence at the Villa in the 1970s," says Clark, referring to a time before gangs were visible in Portland.

It would be foolish to suggest that assigning a few counselors at Columbia Villa would solve this city's gang problem. But it is also clear that the other proposed solutions—such as building more jails—will not do the job alone, especially if Joseph Winston is typical of the people involved in this city's gangs. The recently released report of the Governor's Task Force on Corrections makes this clear. So does the Urban League's Perkins, who argues that government needs to support community agencies and such grassroots movements as the recently formed Coalition of Black Men, which hopes to provide positive role models for impressionable young black males.

"The moneys are available in this country to reduce this problem," says Perkins. "Maybe not in the state of Oregon at this time, but in the country. It's all about how we set our priorities."

Printed by permission of the Willamette Week, August 25-31, 1988.



Rev. Hill discussing options to solving Portland's gang problem.

Rev. Clarence R. Hill

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our society? By participating in the work force and by getting involved in some kind of self help program perhaps we can give them a new direction. Will Portland bring their resources to bear in order for us to achieve this goal?

Portland Observer: Is our problem in Portland any different from what you have experienced in California?

The Rev. Hill: I see the same general kinds of behavior, but I see the problems here largely influenced by California gangs. I am not talking particularly about southern California. The difference between Portland and California is that down there the gangs have a more traditional demeanor. That is to say that they have been in existence much longer which means that they bring to bear a more callous nature. They are intractable to change and the suggestion of a new direction. The gangs here in Portland are rather new and more impressionable. I think here in Portland it is unique for a person such as myself to come here with the desire to help.

The possibilities for success here in Portland are far more achievable than they are in southern California where we are dealing with a large population of hard core incorrigibles.

Portland Observer: How do you view our approach to this problem, is it effective?

The Rev. Hill: I see you just scratching the surface. There needs to be more in-depth involvement at every level of the community.

Portland Observer: Are we competent enough to address this situation effectively as you see it now?

The Rev. Hill: Not at the present time. I think the City of Portland and the various concerned individuals have not been equipped with the kind of exposure that would allow them to cope, but the genuineness of your effort is quite apparent. I see an interest which I believe from this initial acquaintance will generate a more intensified effort which will in time ameliorate the problem.

Portland Observer: In your eulogy for Ray Ray Winston you said that we need to start preventive action down in the elementary schools with the younger children if we are to avoid having them later become entrapped with the gang culture. Would you expand on that notion?

The Rev. Hill: We need prevention modules. I am concerned as to whether a person who has not had experience or training for operating in the crisis ghetto is going to comprehend the essence of the problem and in the long run do far more harm than good. It has a lot to do with knowing the psychology and speaking the language of the street-wise youngster. If you always have operated in the middle class arena, it is not likely that you are going to have any success in applying your education and experience to the grass roots level. But if you have had the opportunity to get in at the crisis level, experientially, you can talk with a greater acceptance and conviction. I believe the middle class certainly can play an important role. But they should be keenly aware of their serious limitations. Their role in Portland will emerge as things unfold. I think that their

ability or inability to help is contingent upon the degree of commitment they bring to bear upon the problem.

Portland Observer: Even young girls in Portland are involved with gang activity. Does the same thing occur in California?

The Rev. Hill: It is even more intensified. When we talk about prevention we are talking about the elementary level—third and fourth graders. I have had to interact with children of even a much younger age. In fact we had one boy who was only six years old but already had begun to display some of the characteristics that would indicate he either had a close association or affiliation with gangs. He expressed a close allegiance to the Crips.

Portland Observer: But even after you re-program him, how are you going to prevent his future involvement with gangs or some other illegal activity? He still lives in that environment doesn't he?

The Rev. Hill: We know that children between one and five are very impressionable. If we get him during that period he can be educated and conditioned with such information that will discourage involvement with the gang element and everything that goes with it. It is like saying no to drug say no to gangs.

The Portland Observer: What about the lure of fast money when youngsters become involved with pushing drugs?

The Rev. Hill: The community has a real challenge in that regard. They have to create alternatives that will not allow youngsters to become exposed to things that make the gang lifestyle attractive to them. There are recreational alternatives. There are academic alternatives. There are cultural alternatives. There are other means by which we can honor youngsters so that they might develop a healthy self-image. They need to learn that the quality of life can be better and that their tenure on this earth certainly will be longer if they avoid gangs. I don't see a great deal of that kind of re-inforcement here in Portland. I went to the parks and there was no recreational director to involve children with recreational alternatives.

Portland Observer: You mentioned a program that involved pick up, lock up, follow-up and go up. Would you expand on that notion?

The Rev. Hill: That is a program which was developed by our group in Inglewood, California. We would like to try it here in Portland. It is a very successful concept and I am certain it will work here. Pick up is the responsibility of law enforcement. It is also their responsibility to protect the citizenry and to preserve the peace. Lock up is the responsibility of the community and its voluntary organizations or other groups that have rehabilitation trusts. They should create avenues by which delinquents and substance abusers can have an opportunity to be redirected into the society. Follow-up should be the responsibility of the entire community in providing programs that will support the continued rehabilitation of the individual. Go up is the responsibility of the church wherein moral fortitude is nurtured. The situation in Portland is complex, but it is not altogether hopeless.

Tragedy

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Emergency Room. Kenyata was treated and released, but at 12:45 a.m. this morning, Kevin and Johnny were still in surgery for wounds to the chest and abdomen. The doctors placed their chances of survival at 95 percent.

The mother, Mary Lee Black, said none of the victims were involved in drug or gang activity, to her knowledge. Both men were employed, Johnny with Boise Cascade in Salem and his brother by Fred Meyers in Clackamas County.

"They are good, hard-working boys," she said "I don't see why this had to happen."

The step-father, Charles Black, a cab driver, said the assailants had been by earlier in the evening and had had an argument with the Williams men. About 30 minutes later, they returned and opened fire on them. The Blacks have two other children, 9 and 10-years-old. Kenyata Black resides with his parents and the Younger boys, across the street from the shooting.

More information will be forthcoming as the story unfolds.

Investment made



George Collins

The Portland School District has invested just over \$1 million through American State Bank, the Northwest's largest Black-owned bank, George Collins, the district's director of finance affirmed this week.

Using ASB an "investment medium" for the \$1,002,035 is part of the district's policy of diversifying their investments, Collins said.

Since the district's funds derive from public money, investing in ASB is one way of reinvesting tax dollars in the community.

Collins said that investing in ASB would improve the bank's ability to work with businesses in the Black community and enhance business opportunities.

"Certainly," he said, "improving and expanding business opportunities in the Black community will help improve that community."



George W. McCree, II

George W. McCree II, 5624 N.E. 16th Avenue, Portland, local representative for the Mutual of Omaha Companies, has been licensed as a representative of Mutual of Omaha's Fund Management Company.

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PORTLAND OBSERVER

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PORTLAND OBSERVER

is published weekly by Exit Publishing Company, Inc.
525 N.E. Killingsworth St. • Portland, Oregon 97211
P.O. Box 3137 • Portland, Oregon 97208

Phone Numbers: (503) 288-0033 (Office)
(503) 288-1756 (Classified/Display)

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 accompanied by a self-addressed envelope.

Subscriptions: \$20.00 per year in the Tri-Country 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.

