

Mayor Clark Makes Statement About Rodney King Incident

My heart goes out to the citizens of Los Angeles whose communities are in turmoil in the wake of the verdict rendered in Simi Valley yesterday. I cannot understand how anybody could view the incident we have all seen on television in recent months and conclude that no crime was committed. It certainly appeared to me that the police used excessive force on Mr. King that night.

On the other hand, twelve ordinary citizens, chosen at random and whose qualifications to give both sides a fair trial were unquestioned by either side, found the officers "not guilty." Apparently, after considering all the evidence, the jury was not convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that the officers were guilty of the specific crimes with which they were charged, as those crimes are defined by statute. For those of us outside the courtroom, that explanation does little to ease our shock at the verdict.

However, rather than second-guessing the jury or the California judicial system from here in Portland, it is incumbent upon us to make sure our own house is in order. We have been about that task throughout my administration. Today we can celebrate the fact that the relationship between our Police Bureau and the communities it serves has grown to one of trust, cooperation and meaningful citizen involvement through community policing.

As that relationship strengthens, we are increasing the training our offic-

ers receive in such areas as cultural sensitivity and responsible use of force, including the use of tactics that defuse situations and minimize the need to use force.

Our bureau operates with the clear understanding that it is not the officer's right or responsibility to punch an offender for his misdeeds. That responsibility is entrusted to the courts.

As a recent series in the Oregonian has detailed, the Portland Police Bureau is reviewing its firearms policy with an eye to making whatever changes might be necessary to ensure that officers only use deadly force as a last resort in the continuum of force.

Because our Police Bureau seeks to work in partnership with the community, the Bureau is planning, with the help of citizens, **Community Discussion on Police Use of Force**, which will be held at Beaumont Middle School, 4043 N.E. Fremont, Saturday, May 30, 1992 from 8:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

It is my sincere desire that the dialogue begun there will increase the public's awareness of how police trained in the use of force continue to be meaningful, so that incidents such as the one in Los Angeles will never happen here.

It is my sincere hope that responsible citizens and public officials in Los Angeles will spare no amount of effort, resource or time to heal the wounds of the community. In the meantime, we'll continue to improve the way we serve the citizens of Portland.

Rep. Les AuCoin's Response to Verdict in Rodney King Case

The decision in the Rodney King case leaves me both outraged and enormously sad. I am outraged that the horrible beating we all saw on the videotape could conceivably be called "justice." It brings me immeasurable sorrow to realize, once again, how far we are from achieving true racial equality in this country. Does anyone doubt the verdict would have been different if a group of African-American police officers had beaten a white motorist?

I am not content to let this case rest with the decision of this jury. If this horrible incident is allowed to go unpunished, it sends an incredibly dangerous message to the entire nation. I have written the Justice Department to urge that it pursue aggressively a civil rights case against the police officers whose brutality and racist comments were witnessed by the entire nation.

Roberts Condemns L.A. Events at Civil Rights Forum

Labor Commissioner Mary Wendy Roberts' keynote address to Oregon's civil rights community on April 30 pointed to the events of the previous 24 hours in Los Angeles as the product of civil rights too long denied. Underlining the purpose of the conference, "Civil Rights 2000...Developing an Oregon Agenda," Roberts called for participants "to get out in front of events, to formulate a response to the mainstreaming of messages of hate."

Roberts urged the conferees to redirect the anger and frustration of minority communities into "peaceful and meaningful action to raise the awareness of Oregonians about hate crimes and their divisive and bitter consequences." Roberts joined others at the conference in calling for a U.S. Justice Department investigation of the trial of four white police officers accused of beating black motorist Rodney King.

"The tragic events in Los Angeles should be a wake up call for Oregon. We must move beyond shock and dismay, beyond disbelief and denial. We must set an agenda for the civil rights movement which promotes the full participation of minorities in Oregon's social and economic life."

L.A.P.D. Beating Verdict Outrageous

The Pacific Party goes on record as astounded and outraged by the not guilty verdict delivered by a predominantly white, suburban jury in the L.A.P.D. beating case.

Mr. King, who was not on trial, seems to again be the victim of hatred and bigotry in a racist society. We do find it unconscionable that this trial was taken out of Los Angeles where a fairer representation of American society could have served as peers.

The Pacific Party stands for equal rights for all human beings and for social justice as a primary responsibility of government. We call on all Oregonians to individually and collectively, speak out in every forum available, be it your church, social group, grocery store line or golf club and demand those changes necessary to promote honest equality for all Americans.

To The Editor

The beating of Jacob Johnson here in Portland and the Rodney King verdict are stark reminders that despite the efforts of many, evil still lurks in our land. This evil can be called nothing else except racism.

We extend our hearts and our prayers to our African American sisters and brothers in our churches, in our coalitions, in our City, in Los Angeles, and in this Country who continue to suffer as a result of this evil.

If there is any lesson in the verdict, let it be that we cannot rely exclusively on our cherished institutions, such as the courts or government, to combat evil. We must do it ourselves, in our homes, our families, our churches and in our communities. Only by praying and struggling together can we overcome this evil of racism.

Let us rededicate ourselves to this struggle for justice through our joint efforts to fight the racism that not only caused the beating and the verdict, but also causes poverty, gangs, inadequate housing, crime and other manifestations of evil.

Sincerely,
Board of Directors
Portland Organizing Project

Portland Future Focus Reacts to Rodney King Verdict

Portland Future Focus Steering Committee is disturbed by the LA County's citizens reaction to the Rodney King verdict. Steering Committee Chairman Gretchen Kafoury says, "We will not tolerate or accept hate crimes...we will not tolerate injustice. Portland is a city where its citizens can and will be treated equally. It is our goal that Portland is perceived by its citizens as a desirable place to live, raise families and pursue education and job opportunities. People should feel safe in their homes and neighborhoods. The Portland Future Focus Steering Committee believes that the community must work together to solve problems related to crime."

Portland Future Focus stands for embracing diversity, and encouraging responsible behavior in reaction to an unpopular decision.

The action steps, within the Portland Future Focus plan, lay out a path for citizens to follow that will insure that the needs of our children and their families, particularly minorities, will be met.

Portland Future Focus encourages each individual to work through the groups with which they are involved, to discuss, identify and address community injustices in a meaningful and productive manner.

Portland Future Focus, the city's first community wide strategic planning process is designed to plan for Portland's future in the face of the community's changing role in the state and region. Currently in the implementation stage, the Action Committees consist of representatives from 90 community, city and regional organizations as well as the general populous.

Statement of Congressman Wyden on the Verdict in the Rodney King Trial

The verdict in the Rodney King trial is raising cries of injustice across the county. And it should.

It's sickening to think that skin color might still determine who's guilty and who's innocent in a court of law. Or to think that today, in 1992, a jury of one's peers needs to be a jury of one's race in order to ensure that justice is done.

The public's got something to say, because we were all almost present at the scene of the crime. Most Americans have seen the beating incident with their own eyes, over and over again. While I wasn't in the courtroom, it's impossible to discount the picture of brutality replayed for us on the nightly news.

I recognize that our court system relies on the jury's verdict to determine a defendant's innocence or guilt. But juries can make mistakes, juries can be misled, and most disturbingly, juries

can be biased. As citizens, we need to be watching out for these times, and it looks like one has arrived.

This case has pricked our collective conscience. Tragically, the unending history of racial division is tearing our communities apart, and citizens are lashing out with racial anger against each other.

Responding to violence with violence is wrong. We need to take a stand, morally and politically, and demand that justice be carried out, in this case and in the future. In the courtroom, in the workplace, on the streets of our cities, there must be no break in our push for civil justice.

No one can rest until the Justice Department's investigation into the case is completed. I fully support the investigation, and the Congressional hearings on the case announced today by the Congressional Black Caucus.

University of Oregon Statement

Gerard F. Moseley, University of Oregon vice provost for academic support and student services, and Jane DeGidio, UO dean of students, issued the following statement after a protest march Thursday afternoon (April 30) resulted in damage to the federal courthouse in Eugene:

The University of Oregon deplors and most certainly does not condone violence and destruction of public or private property. Regrettably, such behavior occurred earlier today as part of a spontaneous rally after the outcome of the trial in the Rodney King case and its aftermath in Los Angeles and elsewhere were widely publicized.

At the same time, we fully understand the protestors' sincere frustration and anger following the California jury's decision in this much-publicized case. A part of the healing that needs to occur is the open expression of anger, anguish and resentment to seemingly unfair and systematic injustice. Now is the time for all members of this community to listen and to find greater understanding.

Individuals who act out and dem-

onstrate their anger by attacks on other persons or by personal property damage such as this must realize that doing so means accepting responsibility for their behavior. This remains true even when acting in a group outpouring of feeling like today's march.

The university's Code of Student Conduct governs student behavior, both social and academic, but primarily on campus. Under that code, the university defines acceptable behavior and integrates the academic and non-academic dimensions of campus life. Nevertheless, the university has limited jurisdiction over misbehavior that occurs off-campus unless it happens during a university-sponsored or supervised event.

Today's off-campus march was neither a university-sponsored nor a university-supervised activity.

Assuming that university students are among those identified and charged with responsibility for today's property damage, the university most likely will rely on the civil and criminal courts to invoke sanctions against such off-campus misconduct by people acting in their personal capacity.

Justice

*They beat the black man, they beat him bad.
On a dark road they thought no one would know.
But a man with the camera filmed the whole show, about the beating:
of a black man.*

*They beat him and beat him while on the ground.
Let's beat him good while we got him down.
Yea, let's show this nigger, let's have some fun.
Next time he'll think before he runs.*

*He's a black man.
Now the man's name is Rodney King:
Something about that name has a familiar ring.
Maybe I'm thinking of Dr. M. L. King.
He's a black man.*

*He's real lucky, some will say, that the fifty-one blows didn't put him below, while the man with the camera filmed the whole show.
As the fifty-one times struck blow by blow,
on the black man.*

*In the court house of Justice, Justice,
Justice: the film played at a slow pace while shock and pleasure
showed over the jury's face.*

*While the world watched the white put the black in place.
Of course, they say, it's not because of his race,
but he's a black man.*

*The trial went on day after day.
The film played over and over, play by play.
We're looking for justice now any day.
It's time for the jury to leave their stand, and retire to the room
where justice begins, about the terrible beating
of a black man.*

*Now, it's true Mr. King took them on a high speed chase,
but in his state of mind he probably wanted to race.
Little did he know when they chased him down,
that they would beat him with their clubs down to the ground.
Not one, not two, not three, but four.
Yea, four against one that should even the score,
against a black man.*

*Yes, I know justice is blind,
but the whole world knows that jury was lying.
Now innocent people are losing their lives,
because the jury didn't care; they sure wasn't wise,
about the black man.*

*Now they could have been bought or they could have been told,
but it really don't matter, cause the whole world knows.
They lied after staying out ten. Is there no justice? Is there no end?
For the black man.*

*To those of you still fighting and hating, put your hate away.
You can't kill Satan, So we'll just have to go on waiting.
There's only one power stronger than Satan:
God: Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. I will repay.
Isaiah 38:18 says, "For the grave cannot praise thee,
Death cannot celebrate thee:
They that go down into the pit cannot hope for the truth."*

Bambi Thompson
April 29, 1992

Community Grocers Assigned Pagers



Minority Grocers get pagers to help law enforcement head off possible flare-ups.

City Commissioner Dick Bogle Proposes Nationwide Dialogue on Race Relations

I am shocked by the verdict in the Rodney King case. This is clearly an instance where the criminal justice system has malfunctioned. I saw enough of the videotape, as did hundreds of millions of people worldwide, to know that the behavior of the officers charged was criminal.

People of every race share a sense of outrage. I want to see this outpouring of emotion channeled. That's why I am proposing a nationwide dialogue on race relations.

Such a dialogue already is underway here in Portland, on a small scale. Southeast Uplift is a model for the rest of the city in this regard. The effort needs to spread to every neighborhood, and involve every citizen.

I plan to talk with leaders of local

government, the religious community, civil and human rights organizations, and others, about opening Portland's dialogue and spreading the word to other cities. I am contacting members of my own Community Harmony Committee to aid in this effort.

If we allow this opportunity to pass, the entire incident—the beating, the trial, and the bloody aftermath—will only serve to widen the gulf between African-Americans and white Americans, not just in Los Angeles but in Portland and cities all across America.

I abhor and regret the murders and destruction in the wake of the verdict. However, I believe the focus must remain on the reason behind the anger and frustration.

We must keep the videotaped image of Rodney King fresh in our minds. We must remind ourselves constantly that what happened to one African-American man in Los Angeles could happen to anyone. We must reflect on the words of another man named King, the one who spoke the words carved in stone on Portland's own Justice Center: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

I join the chorus of voices calling for prosecution of the officers involved by the U.S. Department of Justice. There is no doubt whatsoever that Rodney King's civil rights were violated. To deny that fact, as the jurors in Simi Valley did, is to deny the gift of reason that separates us from savages.

The Portland Observer

(USPS 959-680)
OREGON'S OLDEST AFRICAN AMERICAN PUBLICATION
Established in 1970

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The PORTLAND OBSERVER is published weekly by Exie Publishing Company, Inc. 4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Portland, Oregon 97211 503-288-0033 • Fax 288-0015

Deadline for all submitted materials:
Articles: Monday, 5:00 pm--Ads: Tuesday, noon

POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes to: Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland Oregon.

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Subscriptions: \$25.00 per year.

The Portland Observer—Oregon's Oldest African-American Publication—is a member of the National Newspaper Association—Founded in 1885, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc., New York, NY.

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