

POLICE / VANCOUVER

Magnitude of Black Prison Population Persists

Black males still imprisoned more than whites or Hispanics

(AP) — New figures by the Justice Department show that African Americans are still far more likely to be incarcerated than whites or Hispanics.

For every 100,000 people in the United States, 3,535 blacks were locked up, compared with 462 whites and 1,177 Hispanics, the department recently revealed.

The figures show that 1 in 10 black men between the ages of 25 and 29 were incarcerated by 2002, while only 2.9 percent of Hispanic men and 1.2 percent of white men in the same age group were in custody.

The Sentencing Project, a group that supports alternatives to incarceration, says the black U.S. inmate population is unprecedented. "If black male inmates in local jails are added, the proportion rises to nearly one in seven," said Marc Mauer, Sentencing Project spokesman.

One reason the number of black inmates continues to rise is the

government's war against drugs. Convictions for drug offenses accounted for 27 percent of the increase in black inmates, compared with 7 percent for Hispanic inmates and 15 percent for white inmates, the report said.

States are more likely to lock up people for violent offenses than for drugs, the report said. But the federal government is taking up the slack, with drug crimes accounting for 59 percent of the increase in federal prison inmates — even as the percentage of violent offenders dropped to 10 percent from 17 percent, the report said.

"We're still seeing the impact of the drug war and mandatory sentencing," Mauer said. "As long as there is a commitment in the White House and Capitol Hill, we're not going to see any change." Authorities credited new electronic roadside alert signs to aggressively publicize kidnappings with helping bring in tips that led to the rescue.

Security Camera Captures Suspects



Police hope someone can identify the couple in this series of pictures taken from surveillance video.

Portland Police, in cooperation with Crime Stoppers, are asking for your help in identifying and apprehending a couple responsible for breaking into coin-boxes at laundry facilities in several southeast Portland apartment complexes.

In two separate cases, both the male and female were captured on surveillance video.

While the amount of money stolen from the coin-boxes thus far is difficult to determine, damage alone to the coin-boxes has amounted to thousands of dollars.

The male is described as white,

18 to 19-years of age, 5 feet 10 inches to 6 feet tall, with a medium build and brown hair.

The female is described as white, 25 to 30-years of age, 5 feet 6 inches to 5 feet 7 inches tall and weighing approximately 300 pounds, with dark brown hair.

Crime Stoppers is offering a cash reward of up to \$1,000 for information, reported to Crime Stoppers, which leads to an arrest in this case, or any unsolved felony crime, and you need not give your name. Call Crime Stoppers at 503-823-HELP.



Not a Good Day

A traffic light tips toward Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Skidmore after a truck ran a red light and crashed into a car and the light's support pole Friday afternoon. The street was closed temporarily. No injuries were reported.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/ THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Tonya Harding Awaits 10 Day Jail Term

Former Olympic skater tells judge her problem is alcohol

Tonya Harding was sentenced to 10 days in jail Thursday for drinking alcohol while on probation.

The former Olympic figure skater told a Clark County Judge that her arrest for drunken driving forced her to re-examine her life and was the best thing that could have happened to her.

"I'm grateful to the judge for giving me this opportunity; I finally found out what my problem is: It's alcohol," Harding said after the brief hearing. "I'm glad it happened so no one gets hurt, I don't get hurt and I'm making something right in my life for a change."

Harding is scheduled to start her sentence Tuesday, Aug. 20.

Her lawyer, Steven Thayer, asked Judge Darvin Zimmerman

to let Harding do her time in isolation. He presented a letter from a doctor saying Harding suffers from panic attacks.

The judge took no action on the matter. It's unclear if the detention center in Vancouver is equipped to shield celebrities from other prisoners.

In April, Harding was behind the wheel of her truck when it veered off the road and crashed into a ditch. Harding failed a field sobriety test and her blood-alcohol level was measured at 0.16 -

twice the legal limit in Washington.



Tonya Harding

The accident happened when Harding had less than a month to go on her two-year probation for hitting a boyfriend with a hubcap. As part of her probation, she was not allowed to consume alcohol.

She acknowledged violating that condition when she pleaded guilty Monday to drunken driving and was ordered to enter a treatment program for alcoholics.

Zimmerman could have sentenced Harding to more than 5½ months in jail. Instead, he gave her 30 days, with 20 of them suspended

if she completes 12 hours of classes for troubled young adults.

"I hope you're sincere and things work out better for you," the judge said.

After the hearing, Camas Assistant City Attorney Shawn MacPherson said he was "satisfied that justice was done."

Harding's attorney said the sentence was fair and wouldn't hinder the progress his client is making in treatment.

"She's gone 10 days, not 10 months," he said.

The two-time U.S. champion was convicted in 1994 of hindering prosecution in a plot to injure rival Nancy Kerrigan during the U.S. championships in Detroit. Harding also was banned for life by the U.S. Figure Skating Association.

Girl Who Faked Abduction Cited for Dope

(AP) — Sarah Roberts, the Lake Oswego girl who admitted faking her abduction, has been arrested and cited for marijuana possession.

Roberts, 16, was cited by Camas police Aug. 5 on a charge of possessing about 1.4 ounces of marijuana and was booked into the Clark County Juvenile Center in

Vancouver when authorities were unable to reach her parents.

She was held until her parents were contacted and made arrangements to pick her up.

Roberts was in a Jeep driven by a Camas woman when police stopped them, noting that the headlights were out, said Pearce.

The driver, Megan Brooke

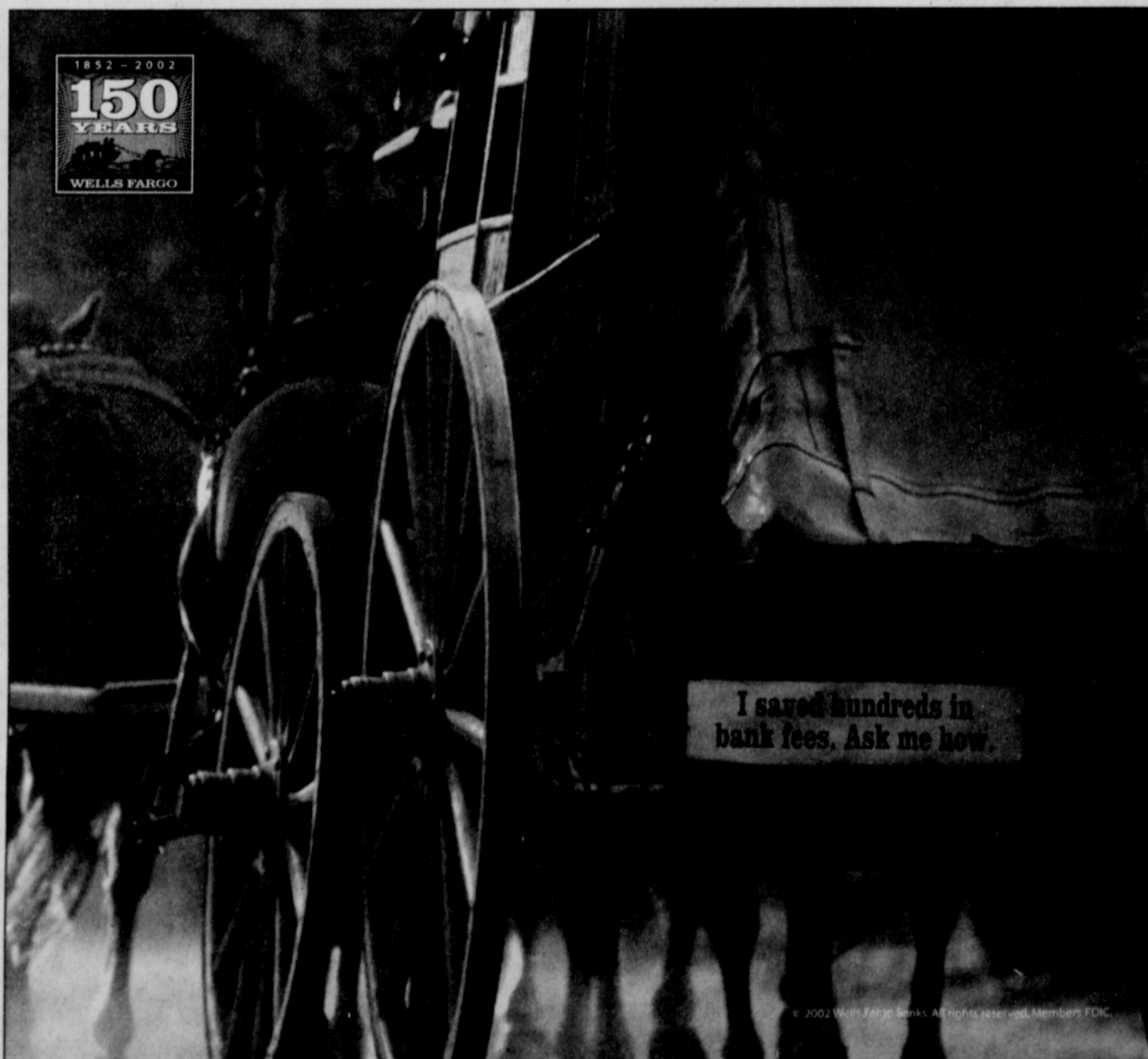
Casey, 18, had a suspended Oregon license. Camas Police Capt. Paul Pearce said a search turned up the marijuana.

"Both denied that the marijuana was theirs," Pearce said. "But they both admitted that they had smoked marijuana earlier in the vehicle."

Clackamas County has not said

if it will file charges against Roberts in the faked abduction from Tryon Creek State Park the evening of July 21. The ensuing search, which cost an estimated \$50,000, wasn't called off until the next night, when she called her parents from Seattle.

Roberts admitted she had staged the kidnapping.



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