

Perez Inquest Pictorial

Three days of testimony captured in photos

See Metro section, pages B2, B4



City of Roses

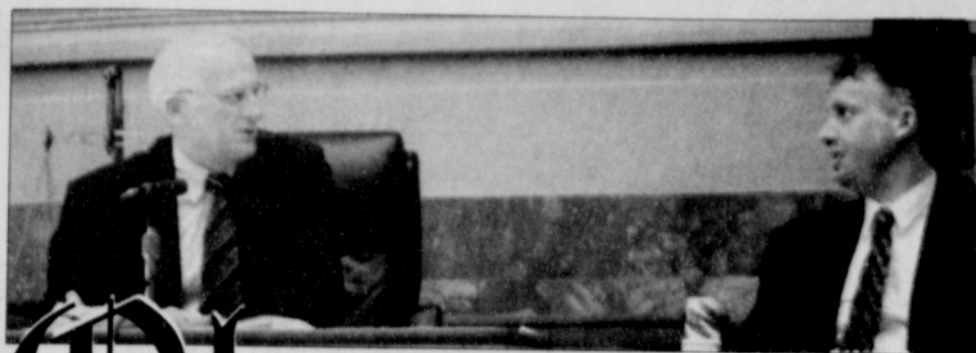
Volume XXXIV • Number 18

Established in 1970

Committed to Cultural Diversity

www.portlandobserver.com

Wednesday • May 05, 2004

Week in
The ReviewMore Claims
of Prisoner Abuse

The scandal of the U.S. military's abuse of Iraqi prisoners threatened to widen as lawmakers emerging from a closed-door briefing with Pentagon officials said similar abuses may also have occurred at other Iraqi facilities and in Afghanistan.

Gore Launches
Liberal TV Network

Former Vice President Al Gore and entrepreneur Joel Hyatt launched a cable television network Tuesday by buying NewsWorld International from Vivendi Universal Entertainment for an undisclosed sum. NewsWorld International is a 24-hour channel broadcasting international news produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corp.

Methodists Support
Homosexuality

Methodists who seek broader acceptance of gays marched together in Pittsburgh to the church's national meeting Tuesday, then dropped to their knees in prayer as delegates arrived for a day of voting.

47,000 More GIs
Commit to Year in Iraq

U.S. military commanders in Iraq have decided they need to keep an expanded force in Iraq beyond June and will send 10,000 active-duty Army and Marine Corps troops for one-year tours, defense officials said.

The Trouble with Hybrids

The growing popularity of hybrid vehicles is a step toward cleaner air and less dependence on gasoline. But for rescuers at accident scenes, they represent a potential new danger: a network of high-voltage circuitry that may require some precise cutting to save a trapped victim.

Americans Urged
to Leave Saudi Arabia

The U.S. ambassador traveled to this Saudi oil-industry city Monday with a simple message for the gathered Americans: Go home. We cannot protect you. Huddled in a meeting room in a Holiday Inn still pocked with bullet holes after the latest in a string of attacks on Westerners killed two Americans and four others, many said they would heed his words.

Family Cheers Escape of
Hostage in Iraq

Thomas Hamill's father raised his hands skyward and proclaimed it "a beautiful day" upon hearing that his son, a civilian contractor kidnapped in Iraq, had escaped his captors and was safe.

Getting Away with Murder

Jury finds
shooting was
homicideBY JAYMEE R. CUTI
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

On the one-year anniversary of the police shooting death of Kendra James, the community is reacting to a second deadly force encounter with an unarmed black motorist that has yielded similar results.

A secret grand jury relieved officers of any criminal wrongdoing in the March 28 shooting death of James Jahar Perez, but a public inquest jury ruled Friday that the death was a homicide.

After James was fatally shot a year ago on May 5, 2003, Portland Police Officer Scott McCollister, was also cleared of criminal wrongdoing by a grand jury but never faced an inquest. He is back to work after a six-month suspension.

The purpose of the inquest set out by District Attorney Michael Schruck was to relay facts to the public, but not to find fault with the officers or their actions; a process Senators Margaret Carter and Avel Gordly, both African Americans from northeast Portland, want to do something about.

Carter and Gordly are committed to making changes regarding grand juries and public inquest proceedings in the next legislative session.

"In the absence of a civilian review of police use of deadly force, the public inquest is the only tool we have to dissever the facts. To



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Jason Sery, the officer who killed James Jahar Perez in a north Portland traffic stop, testifies during live TV coverage of the Multnomah County District Attorney's inquest.



Senators Avel Gordly (left) and Margaret Carter, in court for the Perez inquest, are calling for changes in the law in how police shootings are prosecuted.

that end, the inquest for the most part did what it was supposed to do," Gordly said.

She said the inquest should be used with every police use of deadly force and should have been utilized in reviewing James' death.

Gordly said she and Carter will work to open grand jury records to public review and consider how grand juries are conducted. Additionally, the senators will look into granting public inquest juries fault-finding power by giving them the option to return with a verdict of criminally negligent homicide.

"We need to make it so one of the findings (of the public inquest) can be criminally negligent homicide so its not left to the district attorney to limit the findings of an inquest jury," said Gordly.

Under current law, an inquest jury is limited to answering only who the deceased person was, when and where the death occurred and the cause and manner of death, which cannot result in criminal or civil actions.

The officers involved with Perez's shooting still have to face their boss, Police Chief Derrick Foxworth, and a Use of Force Review Board, which is currently being assembled. An internal review of the police bureau and a civil rights investigation by the FBI are also underway.

The Use of Force Review Board is a new creation, resulting from policy changes following James' death. The panel will consist of two citizens, a liaison from the mayor's

continued ▼ on page B2

Perez Family Addresses Inquest Jury

Faults mindset in
police stops

The following statement to the inquest jury looking into the death of James Jahar Perez was made on behalf of the Perez family:

The Perez family appreciates the opportunity to thank the inquest jury for its role in allowing the tragic facts of Jahar Perez's death to be made public and the opportunity to make this brief statement.

It seems clear to the Perez family that Jahar's death was unnecessary. The particular issue before the inquest jury is "What was the cause of Jahar Perez's death?" The immediate answer, of course, is that he died from the gunshot wounds inflicted by Officer Sery.



Samayah Perez, the sister of James Jahar Perez, views autopsy photos presented as evidence on the first day of the public inquest into his death.

But there are other questions of importance to the family and the community. Some of these questions are: (1) Why are Portland police officers making pretext stops of African Americans in Portland? (2) Since when are Portland officers expected to stop African American drivers simply because they think their car is "too nice" for the neighborhood? (3) Why wasn't less than lethal force used to arrest an unarmed man?

It seems obvious from the evidence that Officers MacComber and Sery had much more on their mind than making a simple traffic stop from the moment they saw Jahar Perez drive by. It was this mindset which caused Officer Sery to draw his weapon. It was this mindset which caused Officer Sery to shoot Mr. Perez who was unarmed and

continued ▼ on page B3

Kucinich Pushes Hard for Oregon Vote

Challenges
Kerry on war,
other issuesBY MICHAEL LEIGHTON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

John Kerry clinched the Democratic nomination for President two months ago, but his opponent Dennis Kucinich is not giving up the race in order to challenge the nominee and the Democratic Party.

Kucinich, an Ohio Congressman from Cleveland, is spending a lot of time in Oregon, asking local voters to support the issues he supports as they mark ballots in the vote-by-mail election, which ends on Tuesday, May 18.

He said winning votes here would send a national message and push the Democratic Party toward change, shifting the debate on the

Iraq War, health care for all and jobs.

"We have a solid agenda for jobs, education and housing that are all at risk because of the war," Kucinich said Friday, during a campaign stop at the offices of the Portland Observer on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

"We must bring our troops home, give up the oil, the private contracts and say 'no' to an endless war."

Kucinich argues that it was wrong to go in to Iraq and it's wrong to stay in. He said Americans are seen as unpopular occupiers of an Arab country because the entry into war was illegal, without the support of the United Nations.

He criticizes Sen. Kerry and other Democrats for supporting military action in Iraq despite President Bush's mistakes.

He said a policy of trying to build

an Iraq with American influence would prolong war when we have problems at home, hurting support for local schools, the unemployed and the minimum wage.

"We're messing around with war when we have problems at home," he said. "Poverty is a weapon of mass destruction."

Kucinich said he has continued his presidential campaign even after eight other Democratic candidates dropped out because of his dedication to wage battles for peace, workers, consumers, the environment and civil rights.

The candidate supports a universal single-payer health care system, creating jobs, changing trade policies to save jobs and protecting civil liberties. While there is unity around the party's nominee, there is not yet unity around the

continued ▼ on page B8



PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Presidential Candidate Dennis Kucinich with Terre Lundy, his national media liaison, stop by the offices of the Portland Observer, to plead why voting for him will make a difference in the direction of the Democratic Party.

PRSDRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PORTLAND OR
PERMIT
NO. 1610

University Of Oregon
Knight Library
1299 University Of Oregon
Eugene, OR. 97403-1205