

LAW & JUSTICE

Guilty Verdict Prompts Family Feud

(AP) - A Multnomah County jury has found a man guilty of murdering his childhood friend. The jury decided Tuesday that Robert Wagner shot Lavell Matthews to death last year over a \$100 drug debt. For years, the two extended families in Portland's Humboldt neighborhood celebrated together and attended the same church. According to police, on March 23, 2004, Matthews, 35, was shot to death on North Webster Street. Wagner left the next day for Las Vegas. Two witnesses later told police they saw the shooting. When the judge read the verdict, a gasp was heard in the courtroom and then the families began shouting at each other. Due to the intense emotions in the courtroom, a dozen sheriff's deputies were brought in to stand guard.

Meth Most Wanted Arrested



One of the county's most wanted methamphetamine cooks was arrested and meth-cooking equipment was seized at this home on North Missouri Avenue.

Bust made in north Portland

A man described as one of Multnomah County's 10 most wanted methamphetamine cooks was arrested March 23 after police raided his home on North Missouri Avenue in the historic Mississippi district. Terry Rae Dowell, 56 was described by police as the county's most notorious meth cook. He faces charges of violating terms of his parole. Since 1988, he twice has been convicted of possessing and manufacturing a controlled substance. Dowell may also face charges of child and elder abuse after authorities discovered that a 15-year-old boy and 18-year-old woman and 91-year-old woman had been living at the north Portland house. Police said the home was used as a meth lab. A quarter of an ounce of crystal meth and meth-cooking equipment was seized from the home.

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Portland May Pull Out of FBI Task Force

(AP) - Portland's mayor is threatening to pull the city out of the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force unless the federal agency gives him and the city police chief a higher security clearance. The FBI has created task forces with police departments in 100 cities across the country to investigate potential terrorists and prevent possible attacks. Portland would be the first city to remove itself from such a team, officials say. Mayor Tom Potter and other city officials want expanded oversight over any FBI anti-terror operations that include Portland police officers. A resolution introduced Wednesday by Potter goes before the full City Council next week. Robert Jordan, the special agent in charge of the FBI's Portland division, said there is no precedent for granting top secret clearance to an elected municipal official. For now, the two Portland officers assigned to the task force have higher security clearance than Potter or Police Chief Derrick Foxworth. Potter took office seven months after the arrest of a Portland lawyer whose fingerprints the FBI eventually determined had been mistakenly linked to the terrorist bombings that killed 191 people in Spain last March. The FBI issued a rare public apology to attorney Brandon Mayfield, a convert to Islam who is suing the government over the mistake. Both Potter and Public Safety Commissioner Randy Leonard said whatever the outcome of the resolution, the city and the FBI should continue efforts to work together when there is a terrorism threat. "It is absolutely critical to have their cooperation," Jordan said. "I think that's what the public expects from us." Foxworth issued a statement also pledging cooperation with federal officials.

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CRIME STOPPERS
Man Mugged at ATM

On the evening of Oct. 19, 2004 a man was standing outside of his northeast area business when an unknown suspect approached from behind and struck the man in the back of the head. The suspect then told the victim to get down on the ground and bound the victim's hands. The suspect took the victim's car keys, picked him up and led him to the front of the business where the victim's work car was parked. The suspect demanded the victim's ATM card and personal identification number. In the victim's car, the suspect went to the near by Bank of America and ordered the man to withdraw money from the ATM. Luckily, the victim managed to escape and ran to a gas station to call police. The suspect was last seen at the Bank of America ATM on Northeast 101st and Sandy branch. A camera on the ATM took photos of the suspect using the stolen card. Authorities were able to determine that the suspect is a white male wearing a gray or blue jacket with baggy pants and possibly wearing a cap on his head. Detectives hope this information would allow someone to identify the suspect.

Police need your help finding this suspect.

(503) 823-HELP
 111 S.W. 2nd Avenue,
 Portland, Oregon 97204

Crime Stoppers is offering cash reward of up to \$1,000 for information that would lead to an arrest in this case, or any unsolved felony. Those who contact Crime Stoppers with tips remain anonymous. Call Crime Stoppers at 503-823-4357.

Same Crime, Different Punishment

Study shows blacks receive harsher judgement for gun laws

(AP) - A study of California's weapons registration law found that blacks were far more likely to be charged with a felony than whites, who were more often charged with a misdemeanor for the same offense. The study conducted by state Attorney General Bill Lockyer prompted calls for changes from the N.A.A.C.P. (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People); the lawmaker who authored the legislation defended it.

The study examined data on how the law, which took effect Jan. 1, 2000, is being applied. The law makes it illegal for anyone to possess a gun if they are not listed by the state as the firearm owner. Offenders can be charged with a felony or a misdemeanor, a lesser count. In 2003, less than 40 percent of whites faced felony charges under the law; more than 70 percent of blacks and nearly 70 percent of Hispanics were charged with felonies.

This study has lead black leaders seek change in law. The report shows that blacks were proportionately most likely to be filed on at the felony level, followed by Hispanics, other race/ethnic groups, and whites. This pattern was evident throughout the period shown. According to the law's author, Democratic state Senator Jack Scott the option of a misdemeanor charge is in the event an individual has a good excuse for possessing a weapon not registered to him or her. For example if the weapon is properly registered in the name of a spouse or other close relative. Scott noted many of those charged with felony possession of an illegal handgun also were charged with other felonies at the same time. "Perhaps more dangerous individuals are charged with a felony," he said.

Alice A. Huffman, president of the California State Conference of the N.A.A.C.P., said her organization would work with the legislature's black caucus to change the law or its enforcement.

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Gap Shows Economic Inequality

Racial lines divided by the color green

(AP) - Forty years after the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and decades after the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. made strides in racial equality, America remains split along racial lines - divided by the color green. Economic equality has become the paramount civil rights issue of the 21st century, according to many civil rights advocates. Fewer blacks than whites own their houses, get fair loans, invest in the stock market or sit on corporate boards, or have any real control over much of the trillions of dollars flowing in mutual funds, pension plans and the financial markets, they said. "Very real gains have been made on some parts of the economic front and the education front and most particularly on the job front," said Thomas Shapiro, professor at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University. "(But) those gains are being reversed through widening racial wealth gaps." There is a difference between income and wealth, which the latter includes investments in stocks or pension plans, equity from paying a mortgage, and assets that can be used to pay for education or retirement. And wealth is where the biggest differences persist. In 1999, during a boom economy, Shapiro said, black middle-class families on average had one-fourth of the wealth of similarly educated, similarly employed white middle-class families. The disparity was even starker across all income groups - black families as a whole had only 10 cents in wealth for every dollar white families had, according to government figures. There are historical reasons - generations of poverty, a legacy of slavery and laws that kept them from education, housing and good jobs.