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'City of Roses'

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Week in The Review

Jose Padilla Charged

Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen held in a Navy brig as an enemy combatant for more than three years, was charged Tuesday with being part of a terror cell that sent money and recruits overseas to "murder, maim and kidnap." Absent from the indictment were allegations made earlier that Padilla sought to blow up U.S. hotels and apartment buildings and planned an attack on America with a radiological "dirty bomb."

Iraqis, U.S. Soldiers Killed

A suicide car bomber killed 21 people in northern Iraq on Tuesday after insurgents lured police to the scene by shooting an officer, officials said. The U.S. command said three more U.S. soldiers have been killed, pushing the American military death toll for the conflict to 2,100.

Obama Seeks Withdrawal

Illinois Democratic Sen. Barack Obama on Tuesday called for a troop reduction in Iraq and criticized the Bush administration for questioning the patriotism of people who speak out against the war.



Student Guilty in Plot

An American Muslim student was convicted Tuesday of joining al-Qaida and plotting to assassinate President Bush. The federal jury rejected Ahmed Omar Abu Ali's claim that Saudi authorities whipped and tortured him to extract a false confession.

Civil Jury Convicts Blake

Eight months after Robert Blake was acquitted at a criminal trial of murdering his wife, a civil jury in Burbank, Calif. decided Friday the tough guy actor was behind the slaying, and ordered him to pay Bonnie Lee Bakley's children \$30 million in damages. Bakley was gunned down in 2001 in the actor's car outside a restaurant where the couple had just dined.



Nike Jet Lands Safely

A Nike Gulfstream jet failed to fully retract its landing gear after takeoff from Hillsboro on Monday and then wouldn't budge up or down. The crew was finally able to get the gear fully extended and locked into place after six hours of high-altitude maneuvers under guidance from Gulfstream officials.

Payday Loans Cost Millions

Borrowers pay average rate of 521 percent

BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland area residents who borrow paycheck to paycheck are being gouged millions of dollars in interest for short-term loans at high-priced check cashing stores.

Payday lenders in Multnomah County alone did \$48 million in business in 2002, according to a new survey and report by the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group.

The cost to consumers is a staggering average interest rate of 521 percent when adjusted annually. In a typical payday loan in Portland, to borrow \$300 for two weeks or less a consumer writes a personal check for \$360.

Worse yet, most of the people who take these short term loans can't repay the amount at the end of the initial loan period and most are "rolled over" to another short term loan, often two or three times, requiring an additional \$60 each extension to carry it for two more weeks.

Out of 141,360 payday loan transactions in one year in Multnomah County, 74 percent of the customers were unable to pay back the loan on the first try, with 52 percent of the customers rolling over their loans three times, the survey showed.

As most lenders charge a flat fee based on the loan amount, a loan for less than 14-days can carry even heftier interest rates, which can approach and exceed

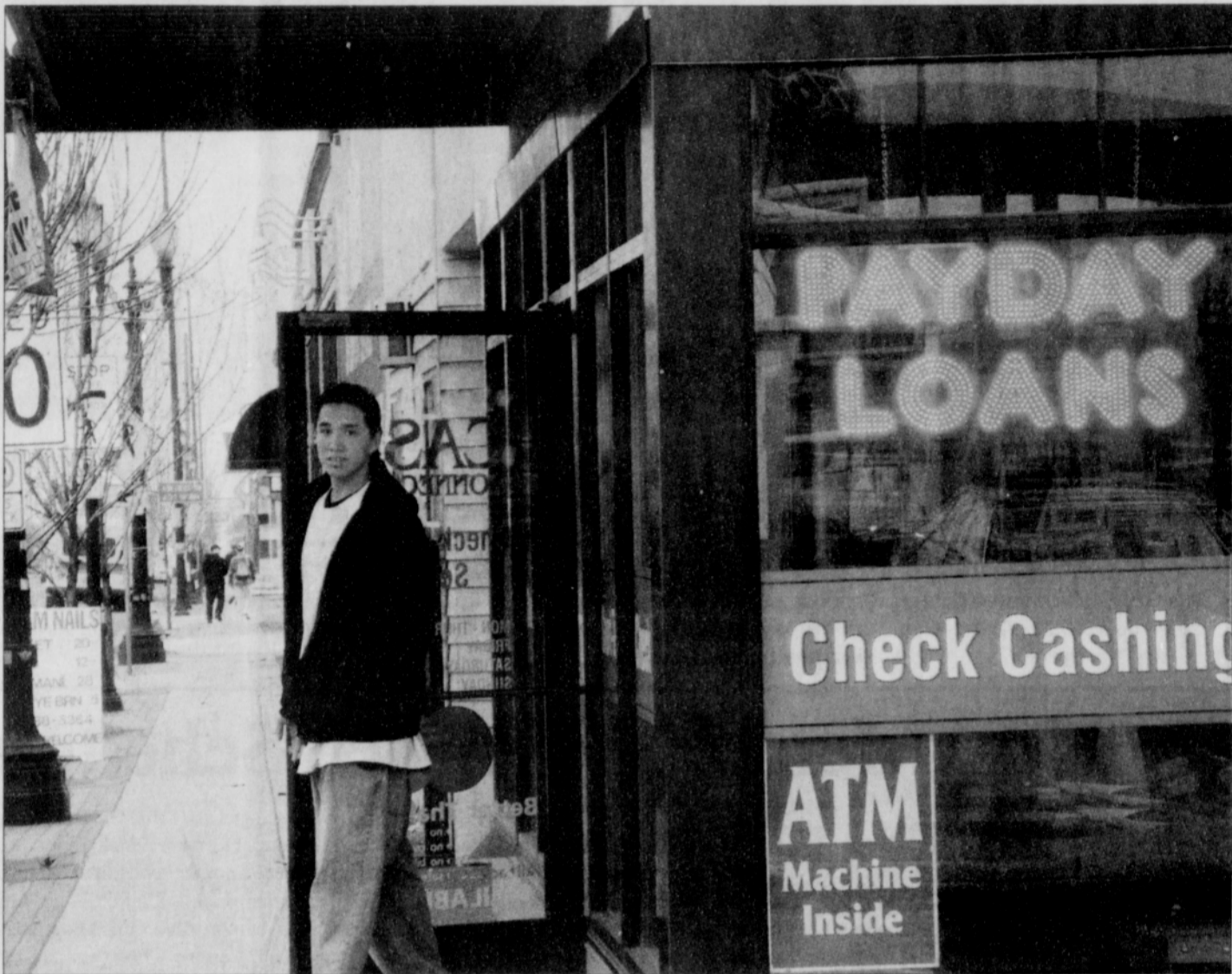


PHOTO BY ISAIAH BOUIE/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Teddy Perez steps out from a check cashing store on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. "It sucks that every time I cash my check, \$63.47 is taken out," he said. A survey found payday loans are even costlier with interest rates equivalent to more than 500 percent annually.

1000 percent.

OSPIRG also discovered that nearly half of the 21 storefront lenders who control 95 percent of the local market are not even complying with the most basic requirement to post annual percentage

rates where customers can easily read it.

"No matter how desperate the consumer, no lender should be able to gouge them with such high-cost loans," said Shannon Callahan, a staff attorney for OSPIRG. "Payday loans are designed to

trap consumers in a spiral of ever-increasing debt."

Nearly all of the payday lenders in Portland are out-of-state corporations.

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Portland's World AIDS Response

Concert Keeps Promise

World AIDS Day will be observed in Portland with a benefit concert and dance.

For the first time, a series of events for the Friday, Dec. 1 national observance are being planned locally thanks to the organizations Keep the Promise, the Africa AIDS Response and AIDS Action Project Northwest.



Ural Thomas

The 4th annual AIDS benefit concert and dance will take place at the Tiffany Center Emerald Ballroom, downtown, with a free educational reception kicking off the festivities at 4:30 p.m., followed by memorial service at 5:30 p.m.

A pre-dance dinner and auction begins at 6 p.m. with the classic sounds of soul, Cajun and R&B filling the center beginning at 7:30 p.m. The entertainment will be highlighted by Portland's Ural Thomas, followed by the Bonnie Lee Band and the African Gospel Acappella group.

Tickets are \$20 for adults or \$10 for



African Gospel Acappella is comprised of six blind musicians who sing in several languages. The Vancouver musicians, originally from Liberia, will perform at the Africa Aids Response 4th annual benefit concert and dance.

students and students and are available at all Safeway Ticketwest outlets or by calling 503-224-8499 or visiting www.ticketwest.com.

Support for the annual Portland celebration will raise money to continue AIDS relief efforts in Portland's Sister City of Mutare, Zimbabwe.

African AIDS Response spokesman

Clifford Walker of Portland said words cannot express the joy people of Mutare feel for the past help Portland area residents have given them in their fight against AIDS.

Walker returned from Mutare in July where local support for AIDS relief has paid for the construction of a health clinic, two schools and church.



Clifford Walker of Portland's African AIDS Response organization, visits Mutare, Zimbabwe, meeting village leaders Misheck Zamba (from left) and Chief Ishe Chigodoraf.

Helping our Sister City of Mutare, Zimbabwe

In 1991, a grassroots effort by local residents led to the city of Portland to officially recognize Mutare, Zimbabwe as our 9th Sister City.

Today, Mutare and its closest neighbors in Zimbabwe are receiving help from Portland in its fight against HIV and AIDS. The devastating health crisis a world away has generated a local helping hand mostly because of African AIDS Response, a nonprofit group that grew out of the Portland-Mutare Sister City organization.

Maria Kosmetatos, the founder of Africa Aids Response and Cliff Walker, president of the organization have traveled back and forth to Mutare since 2000. They can now proudly say that a church, two schools and finally a health clinic were provided from local donations to a population peril a world way.

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