

OPINION

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Police Used Excessive Force, Bad Judgment

My son could have been killed

Editor's note: The following is a copy of a complaint sent to Portland's Independent Police Review Division alleging police misconduct.

BY MIKE LASLEY

On Nov. 22 at about 11 a.m., Sgt. Tom McGranahan responded to an activated house alarm at my home located on North Wabash.

The cause of the alarm was my son, Julian Lasley coming home, trying to use his key to enter the front door and finding the security chain latched. This situation made it necessary for him to close the front door and go to the back door to enter the house using his back door key.

When he entered, the alarm had just started to sound off. He entered the alarm code, silencing the

horn and deactivating the alarm. Julian proceeded to go up stairs and undress to go to bed waiting for the alarm company, Brinks to call back for the all clear.

Julian fell asleep! In the meantime, Sgt. McGranahan arrived on the scene, assessed the situation by going around to the back door, and upon seeing foot prints leading into the back door, in his words "deducted that someone was inside robbing the house."

There were no signs of forced entry, and the alarm was not sounding. The sergeant called in back up and when back up arrived tried opening the front door. The door was unlocked, but the chain was still securing the door thus preventing entrance. There was also no alarm sounding which the police would have heard with the door ajar, which would draw most people in my estimation

to conclude that who ever was in the house had silenced it by entering the code. The person knowing the code would most likely belong on the premises. But the sergeant did not draw that conclusion and entered the house by kicking the

this taking place while he was dressed only in boxer shorts and tee shirt.

Julian was telling them the whole time that he lived there while they were telling him he was robbing the house, don't move or they would

obvious clues as to Julian's identity. There were pictures on the wall in the hall and living room with Julian in them. The alarm was not sounding off, telling the officers that someone knowing the code had silenced it, and would most likely not be a robber. Julian would not likely be robbing the house in his underwear and bare feet. There was no sign of forced entry, meaning a key had most likely been used to get in.

The officers finally accepted Julian's explanation of who he was when he told them that I work for the City of Portland, that I work in facilities and maintain the

police precincts, and that my name was Mike Lasley. Upon getting that information, the police released Julian, and called me on my work phone to ask me to identify Julian. They also told me

how to go about getting my door fixed, and then told my son they were sorry and left the house.

I live in a neighborhood where there are few people of color, and have been the only black person on my block since 1989. My feeling is that my son, being black, looked out of place (profiling) to the police, leading them to draw the wrong conclusions about my son's reasons for being in the house.

What if Julian, thinking that the house was being broken into, had come down the steps carrying a base ball bat for his personal protection? He could well have been shot!

He could well have been killed.

I believe the police overreacted in this case. My son will be filing a complaint as the victim also. The information as to the police activities were as told to me by Sgt. McGranahan, my son Julian and the police report.

Julian was telling them the whole time that he lived there while they were telling him he was robbing the house, don't move or they would shoot.

door in.

Upon hearing the commotion, my son started down the steps, was met by several police, guns drawn and pointed at him, was slammed to the ground and hand cuffed. All of

shoot. The police proceeded to pull his shorts down to check for weapons exposing him to a female ride along.

My feeling is that poor judgment was shown by the police ignoring

Effects of Racism Alive and Well

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

By now most of the world has seen the video of actor/comedian Michael Richards' racist, on-stage rant.

Richards, performing at an L.A. comedy club, hurled the "n" word at black audience members who "interrupted" his show. The performer has since gone on talk shows - Rev. Jesse Jackson's radio show among them - to apologize. He promises to seek anger management counseling and guarantees this will never happen again. That's not enough.

Richards' should pay for his offensive behavior. No money should go directly to the men he insulted, although they do deserve personal apologies. Rather, Richards' should contribute some of his wealth to the well-being of the people he so easily degraded.



Michael Richards swears he is not a racist. Yet, during his tirade, he used the "n" word at least seven times. He didn't stop there. He told the men

that years ago, they would have, in effect, been lynched for stepping out of line. Later, he says they should have known better than to interrupt the white man. Intellectually, one can try to justify a white person letting the "n" word slip from their tongue. Once, But not seven times. And, it is impossible to make a case for a person who seemingly years for the "good old days" of lynching and a black man knowing his place.

Richards' comments clearly bubbled up from a place of hate; these feelings had long been simmering and finally boiled over. Going on a late-night television to

apologize and using an outdated term such as "Afro-American" did absolutely nothing to make Richards a sympathetic character.

Several civic leaders have proposed a boycott of Richards' work.

By letting (Michael) Richards off with a simple apology, it becomes all too easy for other whites to begin degrading African-Americans and other people of color.

While boycotts are effective, it doesn't get to the root of the comedian's problem—a problem he refuses to admit to. By letting Richards off with a simple apology, it becomes all too easy for other whites to begin degrading African-Americans and other people of

color. A quick scan of internet blogs and discussion forums shows that there is a lot of hate out there—some folks are on the web, anonymously, say that Richards was justified in degrading the two men; after all,

they interrupted him.

Others are saying that black comedians like Chris Rock make fun of white people all the time. And some are saying that Richards has apologized and black folks are making a big deal out of nothing. First, Chris Rock and other black comedians

Comments bubbled up from hate

make racially charged comments in the context of a joke. Whether it's right or wrong is not up for discussion. Richards, on the other hand, launched a personal attack on members of his audience. There is a difference. Secondly, if there are whites, even if only a handful, that think it is okay for a white man to publicly berate and verbally abuse black men, then this country can never move towards the dream of full equality that so many of our elders, black and white, sacrificed so much for.

Someone suggested that Richards pay \$500,000 for each instance he used the "n" word to

the charity of his choice to atone for his misdeed. I say he should pay \$500,000 for each utterance of the word - that's at least \$3.5 million - to the United Negro College Fund. With this money, the UNCF would be able to provide a college education for deserving young people. By educating the next generation, our people will be better prepared to fight the effects of racism that is clearly alive and well.

Judge Greg Mathis is national vice president of Rainbow PUSH and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Love-Hate for Sports

Competition good, politics bad

BY KENNETH R. BROWN II

As an athlete, coach and fan, I love watching sports. The competition and the inward and outward drama are exhilarating.

But as a person of justice and faith, I hate the injustice in the sports industry--the smothering of progressive thought, the abuse of poor people and people of color, the avarice that permeates sports culture. I can scarcely watch a game or read the sports page without this bedeviling dichotomy haunting me.

You see, I enjoy the game of basketball thoroughly. But I'm angered by the heavy-handed conglomeration of the NBA, with society's acquiescence, rules its players.

Consider the vilification of Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf, who as a member of the Denver Nuggets in 1996, refused to

stand for a few games during the playing of the National Anthem. His faith convictions and sense of justice led him to do this in protest of United States oppression worldwide. Instead of being commended for speaking his mind and being true to his spiritual principles, he was fined by the league and ridiculed by media, fans and other players.

Abdul-Rauf, now a Muslim imam and player in Europe, was out of the NBA within a couple years. Consider the reaction to Steve Nash, when he spoke in 2003 against the invasion of Iraq. He likewise was berated for daring to stand for peace.

Apparently, critical analysis is not encouraged among the league's athletes and fans. Have you noted the preponderance of "NBA Cares" commercials during 2006 playoffs and this season - designed, it would seem, to get us happy about some limited acts of charity while that same league squelches justice comments and action?

I love the weekly build-up to a

good game of football. But I was disgusted by the build up to the New Orleans Saints-Carolina Panthers game on "Monday Night Football" earlier this NFL season which hyped up a supposedly resurgent city of New Orleans and the re-opening of the Super Dome--disregarding the lack of recovery of communities of color that are still devastated from Katrina and our government's response, and then sweeping under the carpet the horror of squalor, rape, sickness and death that the Super Dome was home to after the storm.

In another incident of aggravation, the 2004 death in Afghanistan of serviceman Pat Tillman of the Arizona Cardinals was used to glorify continued U.S. aggression in the Middle East. In reality, Tillman, who was very critical of the war and the Bush administration, was killed in an egregious error of friendly fire.

I lament the way in which young phenoms endorse companies with oppressive labor practices. No one, I'm sure, has told the young superstars of sweatshops abuse and how they could use their fame to fight it. If they follow in the footsteps of icons such as Tiger Woods or Michael Jordan, they may never use their influence to better the plight of workers.

I'm offended by right-wing soccer hooligans who hurl epithets and bananas at black players in stadiums across Europe. I'm troubled by the dearth of women and people of color in sports ownership and front-office management. I grieve at the rampant homophobia.

Don't you just love sports? Don't you just hate injustice?

Kenneth R. Brown II is with the office of Youth & Young Adult Empowerment at the United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries.



As a person of justice and faith, I hate the injustice in the sports industry.

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