

# OPINION

Opinion articles do not necessarily reflect or represent the views of The Portland Observer

## Letters to the Editor Police Misconduct

In the last six months, Portland police have once again attacked a mentally ill person. Your Dec. 20 account of Sir J. Millage, a 15-year-old African American autistic boy, who was tasered made me sick to my stomach.

Portland police officers stated that the reason Millage was stopped was because he didn't have a shirt or shoes on in the middle the night. As far as I see it, no law was broken. With the many cold nights that we have had, why didn't it cross Portland officer Andrew Griggs' mind that Millage may have been a person who suffers a mental disability?

I feel that Millage who has the mind of a 2-year-old and can hardly talk was probably more afraid of Portland P.D. officers not knowing what to do or how to defend himself.

Officer Griggs said that Millage was holding a large tan item, "possibly" a large piece of metal, and that Millage's fixed gaze led him to shoot the kid with the tazer. Not once did the officer state that Millage tried to attack him or any other officers. As far as a fixed gaze, I myself would have a fixed gaze if officers were standing in front of me with a tazer pointing at me.

The police stated that they interpreted Millage's cries as anger rather than pain. And that he refused to roll onto his stomach. Remember this African American youth had the mind of a 2-year-old. This was probably the most pain he had ever encountered in his life. Millage's cries would be more of a child who couldn't understand to roll on his stomach at the time he was being tasered. With the kid being tasered a number of times why would Officer Michael Chapman beat him with his baton?

The Portland Police Department needs to be accountable for what happened. All the churches across Portland need to stand and support Pastor Mary Overstreet Smith, Millage's great grandmother. The churches need to get involved in the community like they used to in the 70s. Not only the African American organizations, but all organizations fighting for people's rights need to support Pastor Smith.

The mental health organizations also need to teach Portland P.D. to know and understand when they are dealing with a person who might have a mental disability.

Sir J. Millage was brutally tasered and beaten by the real gang in blue. Power to the people.

Gary Clay Sr.  
Northeast Portland

THE DEFINITION OF INSANITY: TO KEEP DOING THE SAME THING AND EXPECT DIFFERENT RESULTS.



## James Brown Electrified a Generation He reminded us to rejoice in our heritage

BY MARC H. MORIAL  
The career and life of the "Hardest Working Man in Show Business" ended on Christmas

Day. But James Brown's spirit lives. Brown electrified a generation, an entertainer with so prolific a body of work and so distinctive a genre of style that entertainers for more than four decades have either borrowed from or have been inspired by.

From the time he first took the stage in the 1950s, James Brown, proved to be a cultural tour de force - his own man with his own vision and immense pride in his heritage. In his art, he embraced the blues, gospel and R&B of his musical predecessors in forging a musical destiny that defied convention and was completely his own. He was the consummate showman.

The tributes following his death proved the perfect encore for a life that was at times difficult and painful but nevertheless important and exciting. Only the "Godfather of Soul" himself could make such a dramatic and riveting exit in death.

Brown emerged the Every Man in the black community, where he forged his strongest bonds. He set aside convention and remained true to himself - warts and all. With hits like "Please, Please, Please", "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag" and "I Got You (I Feel Good)," he made an indelible imprint on American culture.

During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, he emerged as an icon of black culture - reminding us to rejoice in our heritage and shout out in pride for ourselves.

He showed us that we didn't need to conform to the expectations of mainstream America to take a rightful place in society. He made us realize that we are as entitled to the rights and privileges of U.S. citizenship as anyone else.

In 1968, Brown's "Say It Loud: I'm Black and I'm Proud" unified and energized the African American community in our period of mourning over the death of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., who had been assassinated five months earlier. It became one of the most popular black power anthems of the 1960s and also struck a chord with mainstream America, getting to #10 on the Top 10 charts.

Through songs like "I Don't Want Nobody To Give Me Nothing (Open Up The Door, I'll Get It Myself)" that chronicled the challenges faced by blacks in the United States at the time, Brown made his activism known in real and straightforward ways.

Despite his penchant for colorful garb and larger-than-life persona, he was hardly a flash in the pan or a one-hit wonder. He continued to persevere in the music industry up until his last days.

Where he had his greatest impact was with the countless artists he inspired. Brown shines through in the work of his successors - from the guitar licks of Prince to the dance moves of Michael Jackson. He mesmerized Rolling Stones' frontman Mick Jagger in the 1960s concert film "The T.A.M.I. Show" who built much of his own stage persona around Brown's signature style. Rappers have borrowed his beats



Despite his penchant for colorful garb and larger-than-life persona, he was hardly a flash in the pan or a one-hit wonder. He continued to persevere in the music industry up until his last days.

In addition to being the godfather of various genres of music and dance moves, you could say he was the godfather of economic empowerment and equal opportunity.

While Brown had a different impact than Ray Charles or Sam Cooke on mainstream Americans, he surely struck a nerve among African Americans.

With 60 songs in the Billboard Top 10 R&B chart, he racked up more hits than any other artist. His success on the Top 10 Pop chart was not as great - less than a dozen hits - not enough to put him in the top 25 artists, something that befuddles music critics given Brown's ability to get on the charts for more

and funk. And his unforgettable stew of blues, gospel and R&B, unconventional rhythms and captivating life shows spawned a wide range of new musical genres.

He was not only the "Godfather of Soul" - but the godfather of disco, funk, hip-hop -- the list goes on.

At the various celebrations of his life -- at the Apollo Theater, in his hometown in Georgia and elsewhere, James Brown left this world just the way he led his life - a consummate showman and courageous visionary. He leaves an enduring legacy that will remain forever etched in our memories.

Marc H. Morial is president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League

New Years Bash  
Sunday, December 31, 2006  
\$5.00 cover charge  
3 \$100.00 Cash Drawings  
Throughout the night

Everyday  
Spicy Hour  
3:00pm - 6:30pm

*The Ingredient for every occasion*

~ Daily Lounge Special ~

Hours Open:  
Sunday - Wednesday 11am - Midnight  
Thursday - Saturday 11am - 2am

**Lunch Coupon**  
20% off Lunch with this Coupon  
Not Valid with any other Coupons  
Alcohol Excluded, Expires 1-31-07

DJ Friday & Saturday  
No Cover Charge  
Free Pool on Sunday & Karaoke  
Complimentary Wi-Fi

2808 NE MLK JR, BLVD, Portland OR 97212  
503-493-8127 ~ Visit us at [www.spiceofportland.com](http://www.spiceofportland.com)

SLEEPY HOLLOW  
NUT BROWN  
McMenamins Winter Seasonal Ale  
NOW POURING!  
All McMenamins ales produced using "green" energy!  
[mcmenamins.com](http://mcmenamins.com)

The Portland Observer Established 1970  
USPS 959-680  
4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Portland, OR 97211

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, PUBLISHER: Charles H. Washington  
EDITOR: Michael Leighton  
PUBLIC RELATIONS: Mark Washington  
CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Paul Neufeldt  
OFFICE MANAGER: Kathy Linder  
REPORTER: Sarah Blount

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed envelope. All created design display ads become the sole property of the newspaper and cannot be used in other publications or personal usage without the written consent of the general manager, unless the client has purchased the composition of such ad. © 1996 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED. The Portland Observer - Oregon's Oldest Multicultural Publication - is a member of the National Newspaper Association - Founded in 1885, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc. New York, NY, and The West Coast Black Publishers Association

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Portland Observer,  
PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

CALL 503-288-0033 FAX 503-288-0015  
[news@portlandobserver.com](mailto:news@portlandobserver.com) [ads@portlandobserver.com](mailto:ads@portlandobserver.com)  
[subscription@portlandobserver.com](mailto:subscription@portlandobserver.com)