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Unhealthy Wireless Signals

Filmmaker points to cancer risks

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

When Congress enacted the Telecommunications Act of 1996, it lifted many regulatory barriers that allowed cell phones and wireless Internet to become integral parts of daily lives.

But since then, some scientists have begun wondering out loud if there isn't an additional cost to these new technologies beside the monthly bill. A growing mound of studies are suggest that bathing ourselves in wireless frequencies 24-7 might bring on an epidemic of health problems, including cancer, that put children in particular at risk.

"Full Signal" a documentary by Talal Jabari, a Palestinian filmmaker who cut his teeth during the Second Intifada, looks at some of the potential risks of a technology that has revolutionized how people communicate.

Jabari recently sat down with the Portland Observer. His remarks have been edited for clarity and brevity. A fuller version of this interview can be found on www.portlandobserver.com.

What is the central thrust of "Full Signal"?

The bottom line is there is more and more science that is showing there are risks associated with wireless technology, and we have to take precautions, not just on an individual level, but on a community level, and also in terms of government to try and change the



Talal Jabari

law that prohibits us from talking about the health impact of this technology.

What prohibits us from talking about this technology?

Well essentially, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 clearly states that the placement of this technology cannot be challenged for its environmental effects, and health being one of those environmental effects, which means you can't ask that essential question of what is this doing to my health, and why does this need to be so close to me and my children and their school, for example. This is the essential premise that the wireless industry use to place their antennas wherever they want.

How about the personal part of avoiding this technology?

We have to realize that there is a risk to us using this technology,

and by this technology I mean your cell phone, your Wi-Fi, your cordless phone at home. These are things people take for granted because they love the technology and the ease of using it. But there are some steps you can take. I would eliminate the wireless phone at home. That's a continuous signal that is being sent throughout your home. Wi-Fi as well: eliminate it, especially if you have young children. Certainly turn it off while you're asleep, there is no need for it to be running, and your cell

phone: use it as sparingly as possible. I think it's only a matter of time before the cell phone conundrum is actually solved and shown to have a definitive impact on a person's health. Wireless cell phone antennas are a little more difficult. But your cell phone, use it as sparingly as possible. Don't give it to your children, they are at the biggest risk again. If you use it, use a hands-free device that is wired. Don't use a Bluetooth because it is even more dangerous because people put it in their ears and they leave it there all day long and it's transmitting all the time.

Do you own a cell phone?

I own a cell phone, yes. Because of the nature of my job and the nature of many other peoples' jobs we need to be in touch. But I

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Activist Quoted in College Text

Skip Osborne, a local civil rights activist, was recently included as a contributor in a leading college text on law enforcement.

Speaking before a criminal justice class at Portland Community College's Cascade campus in north Portland, Osborne said it was a genuine honor to be included in the fifth edition of "Multicultural Law Enforcement: Strategies for Peacekeeping in a Diverse Society."

Osborne, who was a former head of the local NAACP and currently heads the civil rights-oriented organization Truth and Justice for All, is among the many experts quoted in the widely-used book that includes noted academic and activists.

"It's just an honor to be quoted in a text book," said Osborne, who was accompanied by the college's president, Algie Gatewood, and Aaron Olson, who helped write the book and teaches at PCC.

Osborne's contribution to the book deals with police community relations- a particularly hot topic

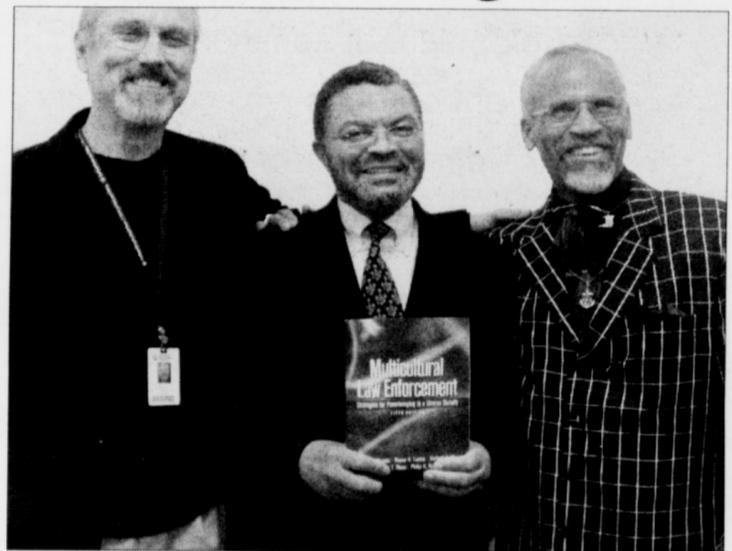


PHOTO BY JAKE THOMAS/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Algie Gatewood, president of the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College, holds a copy of the new edition of Multicultural Law Enforcement, with two of the book's contributors: Campus professor and book co-author Aaron Olson (right) and Skip Osborne a local civil rights activist.

right now.

"The police must meet with the community on a regular basis- not

when there is a crisis but before there is a crisis," Osborne is quoted as saying in the book.