

LAW & JUSTICE

Judge Orders Parish Bennette Jr. to Remain in Jail

Multnomah County Judge Richard C. Baldwin ruled Thursday that Parrish Bennette Jr. remain held without bail on murder and manslaughter charges in the alleged killing of 14-year-old Yashanne Vaughn, who has been missing since March 14.

The hearing had resumed on

Thursday, July 7, after a full day of testimony on June 24.

Prosecutor Brian Davidson said Bennette, 16, told his father he shot Vaughn on accident, before he got rid of her body. Evidence, however, has led stakeholders to believe her death was not an accident.

Blood splatter evidence found

within Bennette's room suggested Vaughn had been likely struck or beaten before she was shot and killed, which Davidson argued counter to Bennette's statement that her death was an accident.

Although the family of Yashanne Vaughn said they are happy he has been denied bail,

they said the search will continue to find Yashanee's missing body, so they can bring her home.

The family wishes to thank the District Attorney's office, Judge Baldwin, Portland Police, the City of Portland, the media, and all of Yashanee's friends who stood with them at the trial to have a

strong presence and voice against the person believed to have killed Yashanee.

Portland Police said the investigation is ongoing to find Vaughn's body, and they urge anyone with further information to call Crime Stoppers at 503-823-HELP.

Door Close

continued ▲ from front

where shots were almost immediately fired. Three patrons of the premises of were shot. One of the Patrons was found to be deceased at the scene and two had serious injuries that required hospitalization."

Thompson said he has surveillance footage, which he has given the Portland Police, of the night of Irving's death showing allegations of violence on his property that night are "Lies."

"With the OLCC there are a lot of non-truths," said Thompson. "Insinuating we had fights occur when we never had any violence take place here or on the premises."

Although the press release sent out to media about the recent restrictions stated the incident took place in the parking lot of Seeznin's, the shootings actually occurred in a parking lot across the street, he said.

According to the OLCC, the restrictions are a result of a number of "serious and dangerous incidents" that have occurred on the premises since the license was received in early March, including a fight on April 20, which they said led to a death after those involved left the premises. Arrests were also made on May 20 for parole violations.

The Director of Public Safety for the OLCC Rudy Williams said even when the incident occurs down the street, across the street, or around the corner from the establishment, the licensees are still held responsible. "The licensee is responsible for everything inside or outside the premise," he said.

The cook at Seeznin's bar, James Mcmillan, however, said, "You can't just stop people from coming in here, and it is not our job to crack down on the gangs."

Before the violence happened across the street everyone within the Seeznin's seemed to be in high-spirits, he said. "The mood was good in here."

Minutes before Irving was shot, Mcmillan was cooking Irving and his family chicken while they celebrated a birthday. "Then he walked outside, and they killed him," he said.

"It's just sad about him (Irving) dying," he said. "They are trying to blame the bar. Not trying—they blamed the bar."

Thompson said, for the community to blame the bar for the violence is unfounded because, unfortunately, in Portland there have been several murders since September, and no one has been arrested.

According to the OLCC, the organization has a Public Safety Principle, which focuses



Seeznin's Bar and Lounge, which opened last March, has shut its doors to business after restrictions were placed on the bar as a result of the fatal shooting of James "LJ" Irving on June 26 in the parking lot across the street.

on community livability considerations when guiding alcohol beverage system growth.

Some of the required restrictions for the business Thompson said were already regularly enforced, including a wand to search people and their bags before they enter the establishment, as well as age verification checks.

The other restrictions, however, Thompson said are impossible for him to adhere to while maintaining his new establishment. Some include anyone who exits the building after 10:30 p.m. will not be allowed re-entry, and the bar must be closed by 11:30 p.m. Further, they required Thompson to implement a dress code.

"Anyone wearing gang-related clothing will be refused entry," said the OLCC in a press release, but the immediate order explained the details, which read "a person wearing clothing associated with gang membership or affiliation, including but not limited to athletic jerseys (with the exception of game day attire for local events) torn or ragged clothing, casual sweat pants or track suits, head wear of any kind, or known bike wear or street wear attire, including color will be refused entry to the premises."

Thompson, while wearing a maroon track jacket, said his clothing would be considered gang-related by the OLCC, and he asked what does this help?

"I don't like being labeled a gang bar," he said.

According to Thompson, Seeznin's is a place for everyone within the community.

On June 16 the business held a Youth Employment fair at Seeznin's, where they

provided food handlers cards out of pocket for 23 kids throughout the community, as well as one young adult received a job doing sign language for the Police Activity League, he said.

All different walks of life visit the bar, Thompson said, but the majority of customers of Seeznin's are African American individuals from throughout the community.

"We have families and all kinds of people who frequent here, but people think whenever black folk come together in a group they are a gang," he said. "I believe race has something to do with this."

"Putting the restrictions on the bar was not intended to close the business down," said Christie Scott, the public Affairs specialist for the OLCC. "We are working off the police report by trained officials."

Williams agreed. "It was never our intent not to allow him to be successful," he said. "People don't understand a liquor license is a privilege, but when it is linked to public danger, you must be held accountable."

Williams explained, "we would be remised if we did not take the actions we took and would be abdicating our role and responsibility to make the environment safe."

Thompson, however, said putting restrictions on bars and different places does not get to the root of the problem, which is there is a very large gang and gun violence problem in Portland Oregon.

"OLCC is not in touch with what is going on within the community," he said. "But they are throwing down the law without any facts or truths of what took place."

Film on Blacks in Hawaii

Obscurity defies achievements

The election of Senator Barack Obama as U.S. President in 2008 brought new attention to the Hawaii of his birth and the people who live there.

Although the latest Census shows that 40,000 African Americans are residing in the islands, many of those are military personnel and their dependents. The civilian population has been invisible in the public eye, in history books, and in the traditional media.

Such obscurity defies the achievements and accomplishments over the two hundred years African Americans have lived in the islands of Hawaii, located in the middle of the Pacific.

Holding Fast the Dream: Hawaii's African American Experience is a 90 minute documentary film that was selected for screening at the San Diego Black Film Festival in 2011 and for the Hawaii International Film Festival in 2010.

First welcomed by royalty of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1810, blacks became a part of the mostly Polynesian population. Many intermarried with the local population and after World War II the black population increased with a small group of professionals consisting of teachers, doctors, lawyers, civil servants and elected officials.

Dr. Miles M. Jackson, executive producer and retired faculty member of the University of Hawaii and the author of two books and articles on Blacks in Hawaii, says that the film tells the story that has been largely untold - until now.

Jackson teamed up with award winning filmmaker Steve Okino to make the first-ever visual presentation of the achievements and struggles of the Black community in Hawaii.

To purchase a copy of the DVD or for more details, visit holdingthedream.org.

