

# The INSIDE

This page  
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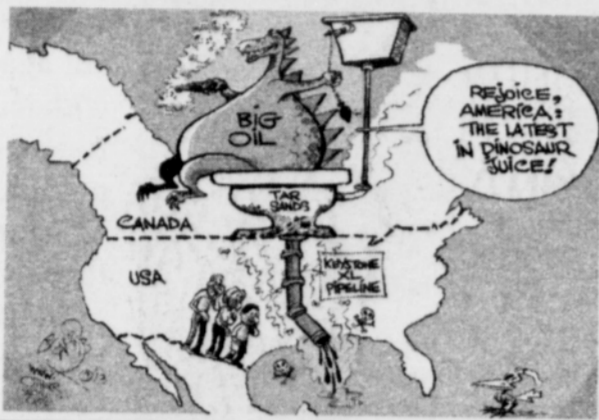
# Fred Meyer

What's on your list today?



**LAW & JUSTICE** pages 4-5

**OPINION**  
pages 6-7



**SPORTS**  
page 8

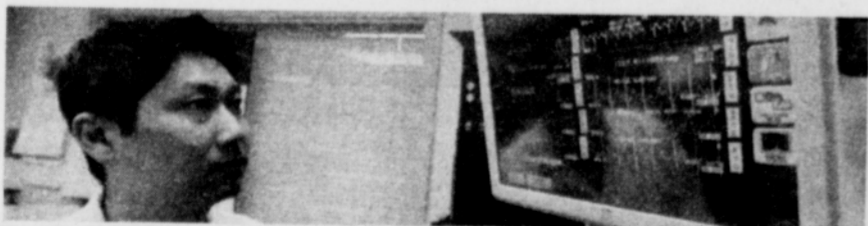


**METRO**  
page 9



**Arts & ENTERTAINMENT**  
pages 10-13

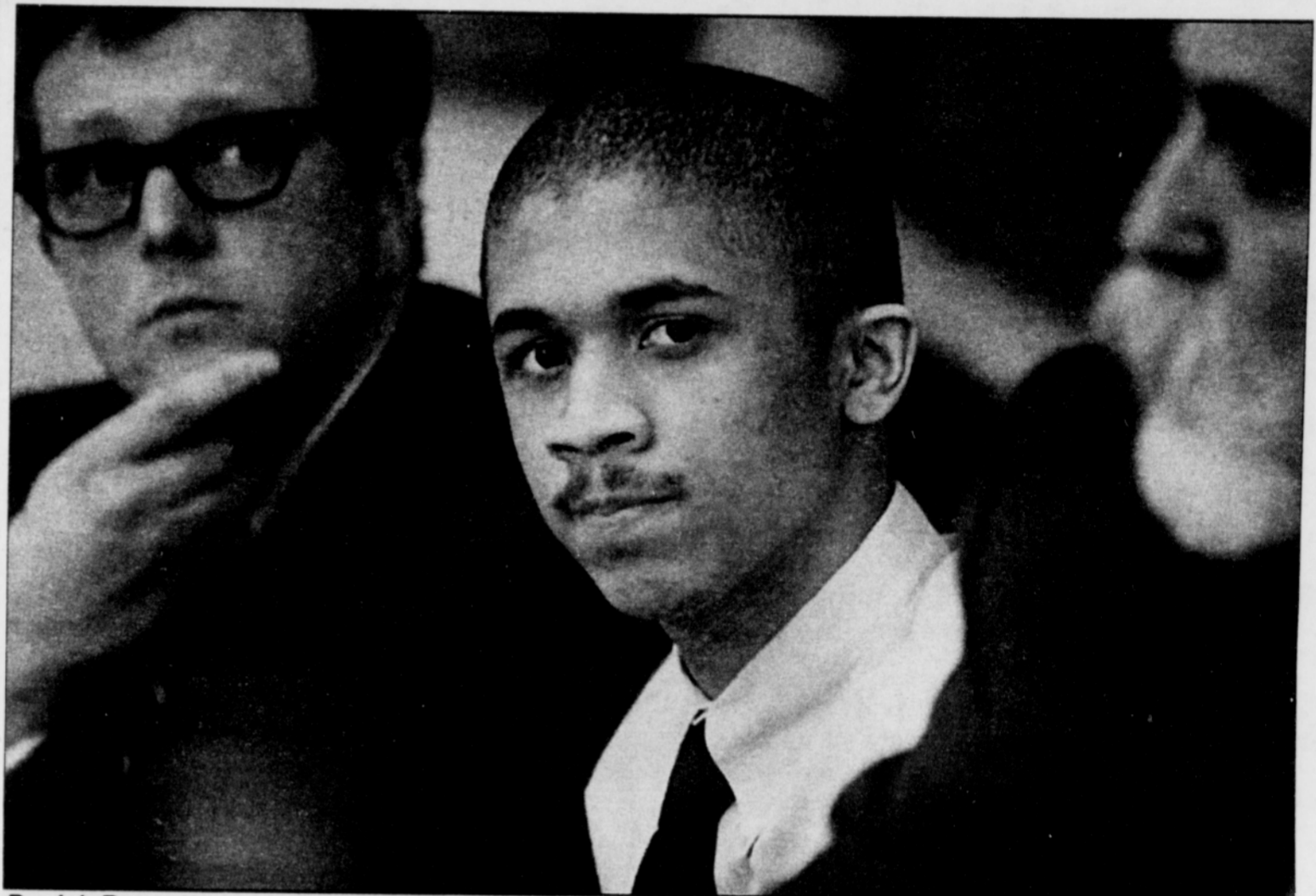
**CLASSIFIEDS** page 14



**HEALTH** page 14-15

**CALENDAR** page 16

# LOCAL NEWS



Parrish Bennette at his Thursday sentencing in the death of 14-year-old Yashanee Vaughn. (KATU photo)

# Sore Justice

### Victim's family outraged at sentencing

Accused of fatally shooting 14-year-old Yashanee Vaughn and burying her body on Rocky Butte nearly two years ago, Parrish Bennette Jr. pleaded guilty Thursday to first-degree manslaughter. The Portland teenager will go to prison for 18 years as part of a negotiated sentence between his attorneys, the prosecution and judge.

Under terms of the deal, Bennette, 17, will have no chance for parole or early release and no time off for good behavior. After he is released from prison, he will be required to be under supervision for two years.

While disturbed by the plea bargain, Vaughn's family and relatives were shocked and outraged to hear a statement by one of Bennette's lawyers, that the defense team delayed telling anyone where Bennette had dumped the body for four months after his arrest.

The attorney, Thomas MacNair, said it was the defense attorneys' decision as part of conducting a zealous defense, and not their teenage client.

MacNair apologized to the Vaughn family for the additional



Yashanee Vaughn

pain caused, but their words were not enough.

Vaughn's family and members of the community had conducted tireless searches for the girl after she disappeared.

"They let her lay in the dirt and decompose for four months and knew where she was?" cried out Vaughn's great aunt Marsha Hayes in court. "Where's the justice for that?" That's sick."

Police said Bennette fatally shot Vaughn in the head in the bedroom of his home on March 19, 2011.

Bennette said little during the sentencing, answering Judge Eric Bergstrom's questions if he understood the plea with "yeah".

Too overcome with emotion, Vaughn's mother, Shaquita Louis, could not address her daughter's

murderer in court, but once outside the courthouse, fighting back tears, she spoke.

"They just let my daughter just sit up there and decay," she said, "I couldn't give her a proper burial."

Prosecutor Brian Davidson said that Bennette will not get out of prison until he is 34 in 2029.

Davidson also said that detectives found no evidence that Bennette had any accomplices to assist him in the killing and disposing of Vaughn.

He said, considering Bennette's age, the fact that he had no prior convictions, and his defense that the killing was an accident, prosecutors and the judge accepted the plea.

Bennette cannot appeal his sentence as part of the deal. If convicted of murder, he would have faced a minimum mandatory sentence of 25 years.

"I hope you thank God for sparing your life because my precious niece's life wasn't," said Vaughn's aunt Shawntae Hayes said to Bennette in court.

Bennette avoided eye contact as he sat between his two lawyers, MacNair and Thaddeus Betz.

Hayes continued, "Because you didn't let us know where she was, we couldn't give her that last kiss on her cheek to lay her to rest."