

Author Steve Almond touches on the violent, racist and sexist aspects of football during a discussion in Portland about in his controversial new book *Against Football: One Fan's Reluctant Manifest*.

Opposing a Culture of Glorified Violence

A fan writes controversial book on football

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Violence, racism, sexism, and homophobia are embodied by America's favorite past time. The assessment about football by author Steve Almond was shared with a Portland audience on Sunday as he presented his controversial new book, *Against Football: One Fan's Reluctant Manifest*.

"We are obsessed with violence," Almond said. "We're talking about a career that offers up to one-third of its workers brain damage, and we're removed from the real consequences of that violence."

During the presentation, sponsored by Literary Arts, Almond went on to talk about the ways in which injured players are quickly removed from the view of the audience; and how rarely we are confronted with the ongoing physical breakdowns that are left on these players when they're out of the game.

Almond also sees the powerful lure football has because it offers young men in poverty, especially

black and Latino boys, the dream to "escape" from their socioeconomic circumstances. He is critical of the process, and offers the following to address these hopes:

"The ultimate message football sends to young boys, of whatever color or socioeconomic status, is that they are valuable not for the content of their character, not for the intelligence or creativity, but for how fast they can run and how well they can throw and catch and, especially, how hard they can hit. That's what scouts and recruiters want. That's how you get rescued."

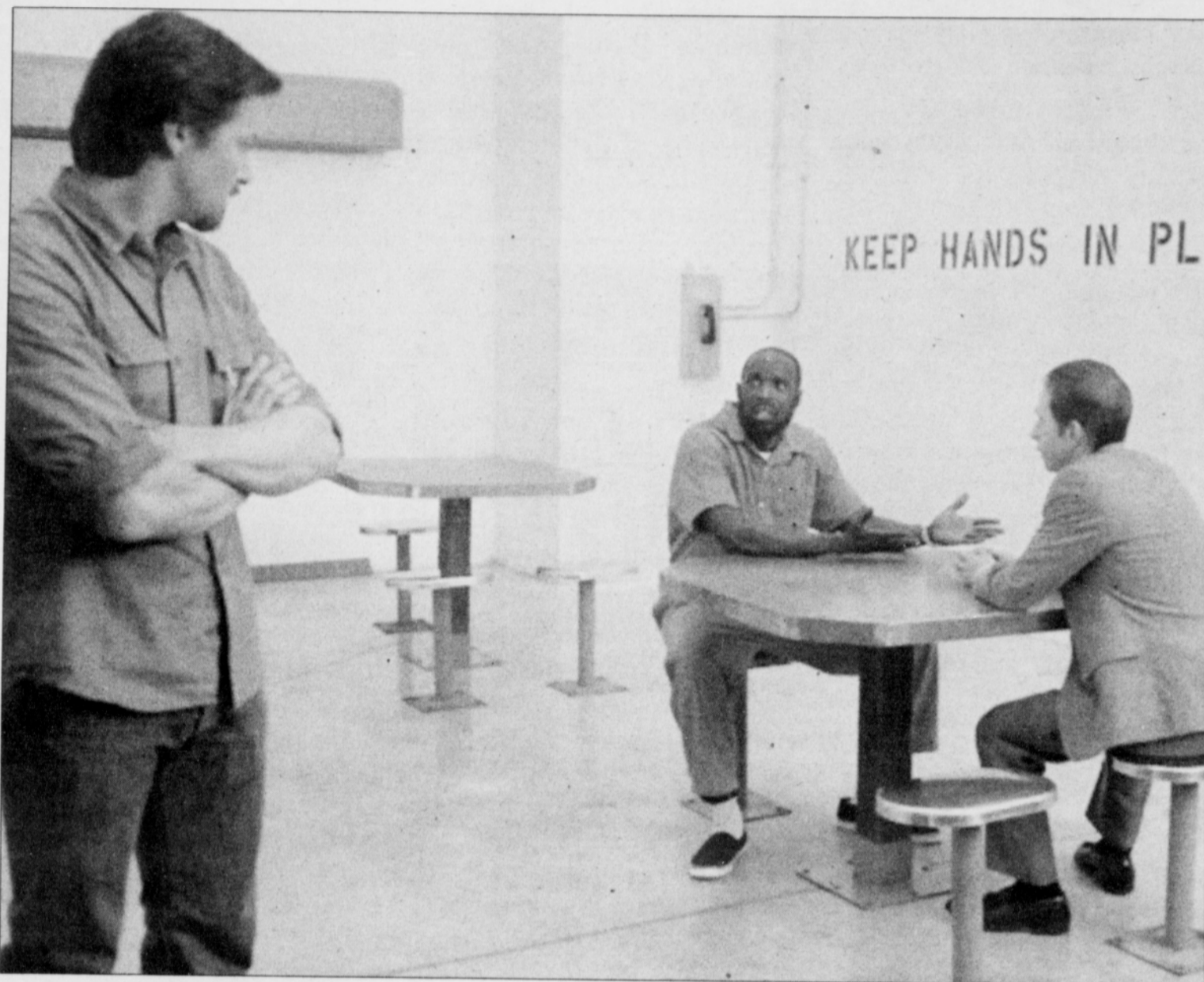
Almond's book has drawn national attention and has been featured in discussions in *The New Yorker* and NPR.

He is hoping for an internal reckoning about why we love football and how we can change the culture of glorified violence in a sport.

"Do I think everyone's going to stop watching the game? No," he said. "Do I think everyone has an obligation to consider the most violent aspects of their culture? Yes. I want that discussion to happen."

For more on Almond and his ongoing search for peace within American football, check out his webpage, againstfootball.org.

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT



Jeremy Renner and Michael K. Williams star in dramatic historical thriller, *Kill the Messenger*, out Friday, Oct. 10.

Historical Thriller on Drug Cartel

Kill the Messenger, which comes out Friday, Oct. 10, follows the true story Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Gary Webb who inadvertently stumbles on the hidden inner workings of the crack epidemic hitting

American city streets.

Webb finds evidence the CIA is not only aware but actively profiting off the transcontinental drug smuggling process. Played by Academy Award-winning actor

Jeremy Renner, the film traces the drug cartel through California prisons and Nicaraguan campos to discover exactly who is driving the path of drugs into the United States.

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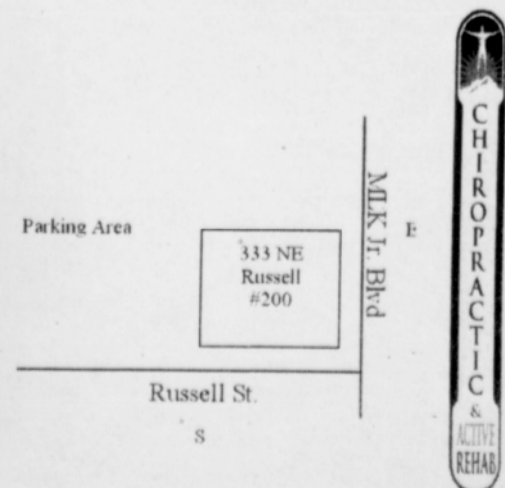
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