

Tazo

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ditions hard to bear.

Shakur Shabazz — a four year employee — was fired in September 2010 for arriving late, soon after an injury caused doctors to put him on a light work schedule and managers had given him a flexible schedule, he says.

Steve Murray — a 12-year employee — was fired in July 2010 after management told him he wasn't doing a good enough job on a position he wasn't fully trained to accomplish.

Lawrence Willis — a four-year employee — says he was fired for “no call, no show” in May 2009 when he was sick. He says he did call in to report his absence that day.

The Skanner News was unable to speak with the fourth employee.

Stacey Krum, a spokesperson for Starbucks, says they “certainly deny the allegations” of disparate treatment or wrongful firing.

“Mr. Shabazz’ complaint was the first and only indication of any such concerns at the plant,” wrote Krum in an email response to The Skanner News’ inquiry. “We take this issue very seriously and are cooperating in the investigation. We are confident that the evidence will show that the actions involving Mr. Shabazz and others individuals he has named were made for legitimate, performance-related reasons.”

On Light Duty

Shabazz — like Willis — said his troubles began when he “challenged the company’s policies” regarding his constant shift

changes.

“I got hired the same day as a Caucasian man and I got changed regularly to swing, graveyard and day shift,” he said.

In the month before he was fired, Shabazz said he began having severe spasms and pain in his foot — a foot that had nearly been severed when a forklift fell on it back in 1979. He visited two different doctors, both of which recommended he be put on “light duty.” He was to work no more than 6 hours a day, according to a note from his doctor, although he said he was still put on duty that kept him on his feet.

In addition, he says he was not allowed to take his prescription pain medication during the day.

“So I’d take it at night,” he said. “One night, I overslept because of that. I don’t normally take medication ... it kind of overwhelmed me.”

The week before, Shabazz — says managers had told him he could be flexible when coming to work. But on Monday morning, he was fired for arriving slightly past 9 a.m., despite calling in.

The 12-Year Veteran

Murray was hired on Oct. 16, 1998 in the shipping department and said his troubles began when he asked one manager to sit in on his weekly meetings with his direct supervisor. He said he wasn’t “comfortable” with her had feared she’d misrepresent his concerns during the meetings. His request was never granted.

On Dec. 17, 2009, Murray called in sick.



The Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries have launched a formal investigation into Starbucks after Shakur Shabazz leveled allegations of wrongful termination and mistreatment.

The next day he showed up, he got a write-up. They told him there was a single order left in the in-box when he left his last shift — an order he said was not there on Dec. 16.

“I tried to explain to (the manager) that the order wasn’t there when I left,” he said. “In all the years I’ve been there, I’d never heard of anyone else being treated with such harshness.”

Then in May of 2010, Murray was told he was to engage in mandatory cross-training on a job in a different part of the warehouse. Because of the previous write-up, he said he

was not eligible for the .

Murray said he was given “no support that was meaningful on the new position.” Others put on “cross duty” were not assigned full-time to their positions and he says White workers were not given mandatory cross-training.

He said he was fired when managers told him he wasn’t suitable for the new position — a position he did not want to fill. He had been told he could not make more than three

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Sugar

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sugars affect the brain in different ways.

“There’s plenty of animal data and now human data that suggests fructose, which is a different compound from glucose from a simple carbohydrate standpoint,” he said. “has markedly different metabolic effects on food intake and body weight. What this supports is that in the brains of humans ... that the brain responds differently to these two compounds, in the opposite manner.”

In other words, your body does one thing with glucose, but another with fructose.

A 2009 study by researchers at University of California-Davis demonstrated that consuming fructose-sweetened beverages will cause unnatural fat distribution. The report,

published in the May 2009 Journal of Clinical Investigation, found that test subjects who consumed fructose beverages, along with a diet of their choice, gained significantly more abdominal weight when compared to glucose-beverage drinkers. Both groups gained the same amount of fat during the study period.

Robert Lustig M.D., a neuroendocrinologist at the University of California-SF, considers fructose to be a poison.

That’s right. All those sugar-packed colas, energy drinks, “teas” and candies young and old alike love to consume? Lustig says they’re slowly killing us. In particular, Lustig says soda has helped fuel the

increase in about a dozen illnesses.

“It’s like drinking a pizza,” he says, adding that soft drink companies have to add high amounts of sugar to disguise the high amounts of salt contained in the beverages.

Fructose also may play a role in suppressing a hormone called Leptin, which plays a key role in regulating our appetites, he says.

“If you feed a kid a can of soda and unleash him on a meal, does he eat less or does he eat more? He’s just consumed 150 calories, yet he eats more,” Lustig said.

Lustig also says that chronic Fructose consumption can cause eight of the 12 diseases commonly associated with alco-

holism, and there is evidence that it can also lead to Chronic Metabolic Syndrome — which is characterized by central obesity (the location of fat around the waist), hypertension, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, lipid problems and elevated triglycerides (which can increase risk of heart disease and stroke).

Purnell says the OHSU study should cause consumers to pay more attention to the ingredients in their food.

“This study is supportive of emerging literature that fructose, as a food additive, is not something we want to be advocating for the wider population,” Purnell said.

Serge

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at the Ash Street Saloon with additional performances from Mic Crenshaw and Destro & L Pro.

Severe sat down with The Skanner News to talk about his influences, his father’s legacy, finding fans in Portland and the DJ that has inspired his best work yet.

The Skanner News: Tell me a little about “Back on My Rhymes” and the work that went into it?

Serge Severe: It mainly starts with my DJ (Universal DJ Sect), who is the producer, he produced my last record, “Concrete Techniques.” He has a really deep collection of vinyl that dates back and is heavily focused on funk and soul records. He has thousands of them. He’s providing the soundscapes for me. I write in a number of different ways. I’ll have some rhymes already there and they’ll match up to the tempos and beats or I write on the spot if the beat is speaking to me. There’s a couple of different ways we go at it.

TSN: Are there any specific artists who

influenced your work on this album?

SS: We’re really into the ’90s hip hop... I’m really into the DJ/Emcee combination. One of the first tapes I had was Pete Rock and CL Smooth and so that was a big influence. “Get Started” with DJ Premier and Guru, and Guru just passed away, actually. Dr. Dre and Snoop. Stuff like that.

We’re just really trying to focus on ... people try to label it the “real hip hop” and stuff, but we’re just trying to do what we’re into, what we think sounds good.

TSN: Do you get much say in the beats and samples Sect gives you?

SS: Yeah, he’ll have a rough draft of it, then I’ll come in and help co-produce. He’ll have the loop or the arrangement, I’ll say like ‘Can we move the beats over here, so we can actually get a whole song out of it?’ He’s finding all these dusty old samples and looping them up and I’ll have some ideas, like, can we make that be the chorus melody, and this can be the bass, and maybe some scratching would sound good here.

TSN: I thought the use of funk and soul

along with your verse really made the album pop. It really works together. Fantastic musical choice. I dug it.

SS: Yeah, I give him (Universal DJ Sect) all the credit. Without him ... I mean I know other beat makers and stuff, but the material I’ve done with him, people have been really responsive to. He did the last album (“Concrete Techniques”) which is similar to this one but with a darker edge to it.

TSN: What do you like to talk about in your songs?

SS: I like to talk about hip hop and what’s going on in it today. I figure if you always speak about what’s going on in the culture you’re involved in, then it won’t ever really die. There’s a lot going on in hip hop culture that is not exactly true to the form it was started in ... I’m not saying it has to always remain a certain way. I think one of the best things about hip hop is that there are so many different styles, but the main ingredient was bringing people together just to have a good time. That’s what we try to do with live shows, to present the best skill

representation of DJ and Emcee, which is only two elements of the culture.

When I think about writing rhymes, I like to touch on autobiographical stuff, especially on the song Rose Blood, which is one long verse, which is all true things that have happened, and on the last joint, which is “Eyes Open,” talk about societal and not necessarily political, but stuff that goes on and there’s not much change that does happen even though a lot of leaders kind of preach that what’s gonna happen.

TSN: How do you say that the local scene influences your music?

SS: I don’t think the local scene influences me too much, specifically. I think there are a lot of good hip hop artists here, but I wanna be heard on a bigger scale. I do pay attention to what is going on. Everyone on the album is a local emcee, and I feel they are the best representation of emcee coming out of Portland. You’d be surprised how many rappers are here.

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