



“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”

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Veterans Deaths Demand Prosecutions

**Bernie Foster, Publisher
Of *The Skanner News***

Between 2009-2011 at least 24 veterans died while they were on a waiting list for medical treatment. That's according to a report from the Veterans Administration.

But the truth is the cover up has run so deep, that we may never know exactly how many veterans have died while waiting for medical care. And how many more veterans will die because the VA medical care system failed to catch their illness in time? Speedy treatment is essential to save lives.

In mid-July about 35,000 veterans had waited at least 90 days for a first appointment. That's down from 57,000 in May, showing officials have finally begun to deal with the waitlist. However, a recent VA audit shows that tens of thousands of newly returning veterans will wait more than 90 days for care unless changes are made.

Congress has now passed

EDITORIAL

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a bill that will give the VA more resources. Yet veterans hospitals have needed more

The cover up has run so deep, that we may never know exactly how many veterans have died

staff for years. If former VA Secretary Eric Shinseki — and American citizens—had been given the truth earlier, the problem would have been addressed. Deaths could have been avoided.

But a parade of senior officials has lied and covered up the true extent of the problems. Some lied for their own personal financial benefit. Others deleted medical records, meaning the truth may be lost forever. Some

officials even received bonus payments for good service, when in reality, they harming the veterans they are dedicated to serve.

Now Congress needs to move quickly to fill the vacant leadership appointments that have been held up for as long as two and three years. Playing politics with these appointments is unaccept-

able. The Veterans Administration needs its full roster of staff to do its job properly.

The FBI is investigating mis-

conduct in the VA and says a full criminal case will be opened if warranted. We can't see any way a criminal prosecution would not be warranted. The fact that veterans died because of the actions—and the inaction—of VA officials demands stronger penalties. Yes, four people have been fired, but surely somebody, or several somebodies, should go to jail.

VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald must ensure the culture of cover up in the Veterans Administration can never return. And the Justice Department should find out whose lies led to the deaths and prosecute them. Those responsible should be held accountable and spend time in prison.

What do you think?

Leave your comments here:

Post your comment on articles in *The Skanner News* at www.theskanner.com

Small-Time Pot Arrests Have Big Impact

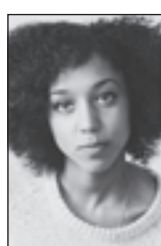
By Allison Dumas

Our current approach to dealing with marijuana in Oregon is failing us. Nowhere is it more apparent than in our communities of color.

African-Americans are more than twice as likely as whites to be arrested for marijuana possession in this state. It's not because one race uses marijuana more than the other. It's because of special scrutiny from police engaged in the war on drugs.

Growing up in a bi-racial family, I've seen both worlds firsthand. My mother, a white middle-aged woman, was never stopped or searched by the police. My father and brother, both African-American men, were stopped regularly. The excuses were always the same. "It looks like your taillight is out," or "We got a complaint from the neighbors that there was a suspicious person in the neighborhood."

One time my brother was stopped and searched, as he had been many times throughout his life. Unfortunately he had a tiny



LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE GRADUATE

Allison Dumas

amount of marijuana on him, no more dangerous than a six-pack of beer. He was charged with basic possession. Yet, he spent three months in jail for a misdemeanor charge that was supposed to be a ticket. The run-in cost him his

career. After dedicating himself for years writing government contracts, he lost his job.

My brother's story is like too many others. A conviction for possessing a small amount of marijuana follows you when you

apply for a job, or a loan, or try to secure housing. It pops up on every background check.

Although black and white Oregonians use marijuana at the same rate, in some communities in Oregon, blacks are arrested for marijuana possession at more than three times the rate of whites. If you can believe it, the rate nationwide is even worse, 3.73 times. These arrests, for something which should not be considered a crime, are doing irreparable damage to the economic future of a generation of young black people.

Arrests for possessing a small amount of marijuana feed into a larger rift between communities of color and the police. Regulating pot to sell in reputable establishments, making it available to otherwise law-abiding citizens,

and removing the stigma of these arrests can go a long way in healing that mistrust.

That's why I am working to win a new approach to marijuana. In fewer than 100 days, Oregonians will have the opportunity to vote yes on Measure 91 to tax, regulate and legalize marijuana.

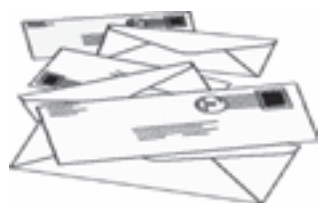
A victory would be more than simply winning sensible drug policies. It will deal a big blow to the illegal drug trade and violent drug cartels, and the tax money raised will go in part to schools. It will raise money to care for those suffering from dependency of more harmful drugs.

When the War On Drugs began more than 40 years ago, only 12 percent of Americans supported regulating, taxing and legalizing marijuana. Now poll after poll shows growing support for this common-sense treatment.

This is an overdue conversation, and it is important that we are heard now. It is time for a new approach, Oregon.

Allison Dumas, 22 years old, is a recent graduate from Lewis & Clark College.

African-Americans are more than twice as likely as whites to be arrested for marijuana possession in this state



Letters to the Editor

Requested Correction: July 23, 2014 Edition of *The Skanner*, Article: "North Portland Couple Celebrated at OHS"

This was a great article recognizing the pioneering achievement of Hurtis and Dorothy Hadley who opened and operated the very first black owned

bakery in Oregon in 1977. Our bakers & Grain Millers Union Local 114 was proud to attend the celebration at the Oregon Historical Society.

Regarding our Bakers & Grain Millers Union Local 114, the article has only one mention of the Union Hurtis belonged to and served and which stated "...he was denied entry to the bakers union because of his race..."

Our Requested Correction:

Hurtis Hadley Sr. was a member of our Bakers & Grain Millers Union

Local 114 for over 25 years having initiated with us in 1965. The only period of time Mr. Hadley Sr. was not a Union member was during the time he and Dorothy owned and operated The Milwaukie Pastry Kitchen. Mr. Hadley Sr. was Union throughout his career with Safeway, Albertson's, and Oroweat. Mr. Hadley Sr. served many years on our Union Executive Board and as Union Trustee. We remain very grateful for Mr. Hadley's service to our members and the art of baking that he was able to pass on to new generations of bakers.

Our Bakers Union Local 114 did not deny Mr. Hadley Sr. membership in the late 1950's. The Employer placed black workers in the Cook's Union without the workers' knowledge. Mr. Hadley Sr. was, as were the other black workers, not aware until many years later that the Employer had done this.

Terry W. Lansing
Secretary Treasurer
BCTGM Local 114, Portland