

Mobsters Caused Excitement Here

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and raised on the upper south side. All of them had family living there whom they knew were good people. They knew that those people were not components of the criminal element. There was no way that they would suggest that the events caused by the gangsters were reflective of the general populace.

The gangster element sought to capitalize on the weaknesses that a lot of people had — a desire for a shot of gin or some sipping whiskey. The people who bought the brew were not necessarily bad people — a trifle weak maybe but not evil. What they did was against the law and lawbreakers should be punished. Even though we can understand that everybody was not in favor of prohibition just as everybody is not in favor of the 55 mile per hour law. The problem, however, is that they were or are on the

books. If we function contrarily to them we are in violation of the law and will be punished if apprehended. We make the choices and that is what it is all about — a matter of choices. Not only those who manufactured the intoxicants but also those who consumed it were in violation of the prohibition amendment and the Volstead Law. Even if they were God fearing, hard working people who said their prayers at night before going to bed they would yet be lawbreakers. Even though those kinds of activities took place constantly, no stigma was cemented to the area.

The capers which were being pulled by the Capones and Schuítzes were being repeated in other cities throughout the country. Even in Las Vegas, during the thirties, there were those who were illegally manufacturing and selling liquor. Nowhere in the entire country did those events irrevocably damage the reputations of those towns or neighborhoods where they oc-

curred.

During the early years of hotel/casino development, there was quite a bit of mob involvement. Everyone knows that. Part of the excitement of Las Vegas during the 1940s and 1950s was caused by the possibility of being in the presence of a member of "Murder Inc." Yokels from around the country came here with the hopes of rubbing elbows with or "having their picture 'took' with Mr. B." The occasion of shootouts of murders or what have you caused few to close up shop while vowing never to return because of the lawlessness of the property owners. Perhaps the cause of that phenomena was similar to the excitement centering around the development, a few years ago, of the Neutron bomb. Of course, you remember the announcements that the bomb would only destroy lives and not property. The capitalist mentality can accept the loss of property.

The era of the 1930s

with prohibition, merely took lives. There was little destruction of property. Following the repeal of prohibition, the gangster elements moved more strongly into prostitution, numbers, race wires, gambling and slowly — at first — drugs. Wasted lives were the results. The two pronged pinchers of blind justice looked the other There was money to be made and it funnelled up to some who were in high places. The business community grew around all of those terrible tenants whose tentacles threw a treacherous tent of temptation which threatened the tender thoughts of teenagers. Only a generation of lives would be lost. What's a life anyway? Right. Were teenagers responsible for the dastardly deeds? Not by a long shot. Some of those who sit up on the hills in the mansions today and bemoan the conditions and who tsk, tskily ask "what is the world coming to?" made their fortunes, to some extent, in the

vomit and blood of the victimized masses.

Always, someone or some area has to be placed in the position of the scapegoat. Somebody must pay the piper in order for it to appear that the job is being done. Such is the case with black communities. Blacks are seen collectively as a community whether it is on a street, campus, town, state, country or world level. What one black person does, whoever that person is and whatever that person happens to be, is a reflection on every black person who has ever or will ever live. Such a burden to bear. We are not permitted individuality. White people do not suffer such a dilemma. Whatever they do, they do as individuals — it reflects only on the person who does it and not on every white person in the world. The key to this difference is their ability to not be maliciously categorized.

In recent days, a group of less than one-hundred individuals have been the cause of intense police activity in the black community of Las Vegas. Rivalry between four gangs in their efforts to control drug traffic is at the root of the

problem. Those adults are using young children as "mules" in the transportation and sale of drugs. Black youth who are involved in the activity are susceptible to the misuse by those money grabbing adults because of the lack of job opportunities for youth in the area. This is not being offered as an excuse but merely as a statement of reality.

As the authorities, in their efforts to stem the tide of drugs in the area, become more involved, their actions are being reported by the media. Suddenly, it is more than the hundred who are involved — it becomes the entire community. One who reads the newspapers or watch news reports covering those activities are led to believe that the entire community is involved in the illegal traffic of drugs.

With headlines like "Three hurt in Westside melee" or "Cop hurt in Westside unrest," one is led to believe that the entire community is involved. Such is not the case. I do not recall reading when such raids are made at Paradise Park, in the valley, headlines like: "One hurt in Valley unrest."

Former Candidate Arrested For Drugs

A former state Assembly candidate in this month's primary election has been arrested and charged with possession and sale of heroin, Metro police reported last Saturday.

Ozia Thomas, 42, 405 Holland Ave., was arrested at his home Friday afternoon. Thomas, who is also known as Bo-Hunk, was arrested with three other men and charged with five counts of sales and one count of possession of a controlled dangerous substance.

He had filed for the Democratic nomination for the state Assembly in District 7 against incumbent Lonie Chaney. He ran a lackluster campaign and was unsuccessful in his bid for office.

Also arrested in the raid at Thomas' home were Stevie Lenoye Johnson, 22, 1944 "D" St., charged with

possession of drugs; Samuel Lee King, 33, 405 Holland Ave., charged with possession of drugs and Lee Wilson Bell, 33, 1117 Adams St., charged with four counts of sales of a controlled dangerous substance.

Police labeled the arrests a major heroin bust — the culmination of a three-month investigation into drug traffic in the community. Police had made repeated heroin purchases in the area of Thomas' home, according to reports.

Police said the heroin was unusually pure with some samples being 90 percent heroin, police said. Police paid \$700 a gram for the heroin. They seized 29 capsules of the drug with a street value of \$11,700 in the raid.

Police said additional arrests are expected when the suspects are located.

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