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NEVADA'S FINEST BLACK
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REVEREND ALBERT DUNN WINS NEW TRIAL

Calling the government's case "extremely thin" a San Francisco Federal Appeals Court overturned the 1980 conviction of the Rev. Albert Dunn for conspiracy to counterfeit \$10 million.

A longtime civil rights activist, Dunn was sentenced to three years in prison by U.S. District Judge Harry E. Claiborne after his January 29, 1980, jury conviction of conspiring with three other persons.

Rev Dunn's conviction drew sharp criticism from the Black Community and nationally known civil rights leaders. Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy, former president of the Southern Christian Leadership conference (SCLC) says the conviction was an outgrowth of racism in Las Vegas.

A number of fund-raising efforts were conducted for Dunn, who was forced to begin serving his prison term because he could not make a \$30,000 bond while appealing his conviction. He is currently being held in the Federal Prison Camp in Boron, California.

Dunn's attorney, Thomas Pitaro, said he was "extremely pleased" with the reversal of the conviction.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Ruth Cohen, who originally prosecuted the case, said she expects to retry the case, which would probably go to trial in the spring.

A three judge panel at the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco concluded that the government failed to convincingly corroborate evidence of Dunn's guilt with the testimony of a government witness who was given immunity.

"All of the so-called corroborating evidence of Dunn's cooperation in the venture was consistent with his innocence," the appeals panel said. "As noted, the evidence of criminal knowledge upon Dunn's participation was non-existent other than the testimony of Tillman Jerome Wexler, the immunized witness," the court said.

A Federal jury acquitted Dunn of counterfeiting charges in his original trial because there was no direct testimony Dunn was present when the phony money was produced, but found him guilty of conspiracy.

Two other defendants, Harold Davis and Mary Jones, pleaded guilty to counterfeiting charges and were given prison terms by Claiborne, but both testified Dunn had not been involved in the conspiracy.

The most serious error, the court ruled, was the prosecutor's cross-examination of Mary Jones, which included the drug convictions of her brother.

The court felt the jury might have believed Jones' testimony that Dunn was not involved except for the prejudicial association the prosecutor made between Jones and her brother.

"We are left with profound uneasiness about the proof of the guilt of the defendant," the judges said.

They noted constant Secret Service surveillance never placed Dunn at the Las Vegas Boulevard office where the counterfeiting operation was set up.

Al Brown, coordinator of the Human Relations Department of the Clark County School District, said the decision to overturn Rev. Dunn's conviction was "A tremendous victory for all communities in Southern Nevada." "DUNN provided the leadership that has been lacking in the community," Brown said. "I think the community will rally more behind him now. He didn't just preach, but lived his convictions."

Political activist Jim Chaney, brother of Assemblyman Lonie Chaney, said he thought the decision "was magnificent." "Whenever justice can prevail, we in America have something to look forward to," Chaney said.

Dunn will be returned to Las Vegas sometime in the near future for a new trial, but he will still have to remain in jail until his \$30,000 bail is posted, or his lawyer can move for a reduction in bail.

JUSTICE? AND LARRY SHELTON

By Bill Hunter

It was recently announced by the local branch of the NAACP that they were going to seek the help of the National NAACP in the Larry Shelton shooting by Metro Police Officers on January 21st past. This puzzles me as I ask myself "What help do they want" or "What do they want National NAACP to do?" An inquest has been held and the ruling was justifiable homicide. That's it, Case Closed. Closed Legally... But let's look at it from another side.

Who was Larry Shelton? Larry was a black human being in his 20's the prime of life who was mistaken for someone else. Not his mistake, but the mistake of the Metro Police Dept. of Las Vegas, Nevada. Now as you read what I am saying, I want you to use your imagination so you can paint a picture in your mind. A picture of a life ending. A number of Metro Police Officers arrive at an apartment house (not at night but in broad daylight), looking for a fugitive. Mind you it is morning and these police officers have all kinds of weapons including shotguns.

Now when a number of police officers arrive anywhere it causes a commotion and that commotion cost Larry Shelton his LIFE. Because Larry came out of his apartment wearing a bathrobe and started down the steps, Larry wasn't afraid. Why should he be he wasn't running from anyone. I probably would have done the same thing. Twelve feet only 12 feet from the bottom a Metro Police officer let loose with a shotgun. I'm sure Larry Shelton never felt a thing. The blast prongly tore half his body away.. Is the picture clearing your mind?

Justifiable Homicide? It's extremely hard for me to accept that kind of verdict. My reason, many. Let's examine some. Metro Police Officers are trained (we hope) in their job. Would a fugitive come walking down the steps into the arms of the Police Dept. in a bathrobe? From only twelve feet away if the suspect makes an overt move. Can't the police shoot to disable and not to kill? What went through the police officers mind who pulled the trigger? I wonder if he sleeps well at night. I don't want to get into racial overtones, they shoot whites also. But there's always that nagging feeling for I have seen the face of bigotry and it's ugly and an incurable disease. I just wonder when will it all end. When will true justice prevail?