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VIOLENCE ERUPTS AS OFFICERS ARE ACQUITTED IN RODNEY KING CASE

NOT GUILTY?

Injustice and police brutality became the topic of conversation Wednesday when violence erupted after a Simi Valley, California jury acquitted the four officers of assault charges in the beating of black motorist Rodney King.

The violence reportedly began in gang infested South Central Los Angeles as an angry mob of close to 200, mostly

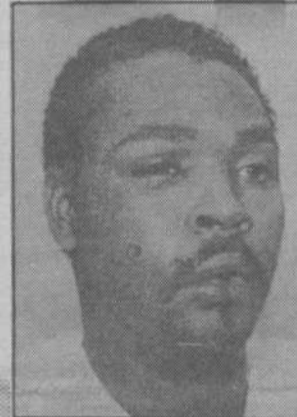
black youths, attacked motorists, started fires and looted stores in the area.

Two white motorists were reportedly pulled from their car and severely beaten in the middle of the street.

It is important to note that while all of this happened, no police or fire department vehicles were seen in the area or attempted to stop the violence.

There were however several organized protests throughout the city. Later in the evening, it was announced that the city of Los Angeles was under a local state of emergency, and California Governor Pete Wilson gave to go-ahead for the National Guard to step in due to the fact that as it became darker, the violence escalated.

After six weeks of testimony,



RODNEY KING

55 witnesses and seven days of deliberation, the mostly white (10 of 12), six man-six woman jury cleared three of the officers of charges that they used excessive force. A mistrial was declared in the case of the fourth officer, Sgt. Lawrence Powell, who was accused of striking the most blows.

Powell has been ordered back to court May 15th after the jury deadlocked on a charge of assault under the color of authority. The panel said it had been deadlocked on the count since last Friday, thus forcing



AN EXTRACT FROM THE VIDEOTAPE OF THE KING BEATING

the judge to declare a mistrial on that count.

The officers had said all along that the 56 baton blows King received were managed and controlled, and that they felt King was under the influence of the drug PCP, even though he never tested positive for the drug.

Though the jury wanted no contact with press after the verdict came down, it was reported that they felt that the 81 seconds of videotape, taped by an eyewitness the night of the incident, may not have told the whole story.

Los Angeles Police Chief Darryl Gates, who has come under fire since the beating took

place March 3, 1991, had reportedly prepared his police force for possible unrest before the decision was announced. Gates will retire later this summer.

Replacing Gates will be Willie Williams, Los Angeles' first elected Black police chief.

Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, who was very surprised at the verdict, went on T.V., along with other leaders, and pleaded for peace in the streets after the announcement.

"This is a very difficult situation, and we must move to make sure it doesn't happen again," said Williams.

Locally, in Las Vegas, the (See Not Guilty?, Page 17)

NEVADA DRUG CZAR OPPOSES THE LEGALIZATION OF DRUGS

Recently, Nevada's Coordinator for Substance Abuse Programs, Mujahid Ramadan, appeared as a panelist along with a District Court Judge from Orange County, CA, a District Attorney from Los Angeles County and a Pasadena Police Chief on the Montel Williams Show which was to be aired nationally the week of April 26th.

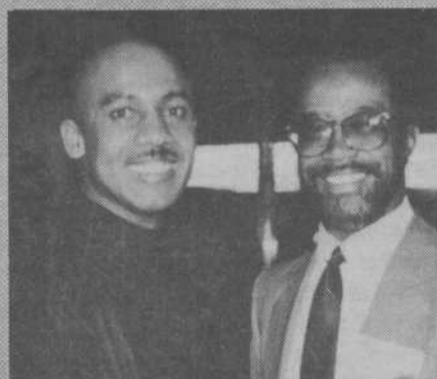
Mr. Ramadan was invited to discuss the legalization of heroin, cocaine and marijuana. Nevada's Coordinator took the position that the legalization of these drugs did not remove the poverty and social deficiencies such as educational instability, dysfunctional single parent (and often no parent) homes, shrinking job markets, poor self-esteem and the other factors that drive both the supply and demand side of the drug market.

He also noted that the damaging effect upon urban infants in terms of addiction, heart attacks, strokes, drug withdrawal, learning disabilities, emotional/education problems would be significantly increased beyond that of our present crisis situation.

Mr. Ramadan noted that the legalization of these drugs would wreak havoc tantamount to genocide - not limiting itself to any ethnic or religious group, gender or age.

The audience showed overwhelming support for the position taken by Mr. Ramadan and Pasadena Police Chief, Jerry Oliver, in opposing the legalization of such drugs.

The options Mr. Ramadan proposed were that there has got to be a shift in federal spending to provide a more balanced and pragmatic



Above is Nevada's Drug Program Coordinator and Montel Williams at a national forum where both were guest speakers. approach to addressing these social ills. Currently, from the \$11 plus billion available, 70% goes to law enforcement resulting in overcrowded court calendars, ineffective sentencing which warehouses the incarcerated populations without benefit of treatment which, in turn, results in recidivism upon release of the prisoner.

The alternative is to be more resourceful in addressing the problems of abuse and addiction by providing for education, prevention and treatment with the discontinuation of mandatory sentencing,

He concluded by saying that we can no longer ignore and neglect the issues of job availability, the need for improvement in social conditions in inner cities, health care, homelessness, poverty, hopelessness, loss of self-esteem and moral values which fuel the engines of social disintegration.



LEONARD MASON

BLACK COMMUNITY ACTIVIST LEONARD MASON DEAD AT 50

Leonard Mason, a longtime, outspoken activist in the Las Vegas African-American community, recently died of cancer at age 50.

Early in his career he began working on political campaigns, and since then he frequently ran for local and state offices.

Though he was not always successful, he never gave up on the call for improved programs in health, education and welfare.

County Commissioner William Pearson has said that while a lot of people may not have liked the way Mason ran political campaigns, he thought Mason was one of the best campaign leaders on the westside.

Mason, who was also a housing contractor, was born February 28, 1942 in McNary, Arizona. Living in Las Vegas since he was a month old, Mason has always regarded himself as a member of one of the oldest black families in Nevada.

He is survived by his wife, Charlene, of Las Vegas; daughter Tracy Little of Akron, Ohio; sisters Mae Strong and Mary Jordan; and brothers James and Jerald, all of Las Vegas.