

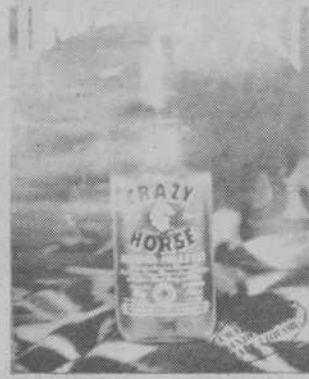
BOOZE IN THE HOOD

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occur primarily as a result of parents inability to discipline their children. While McNeal said the issue is primarily a question of values in society, the alarming observation of 8 of 10 customers who patronized his establishment within a 20-minute span exiting with some form of alcohol was made.

Inches away from the front entrance of his store, loiterers await customers soliciting "change"-pennies, nickles, dimes, and dollars-used to buy the next drink. The number one product sold from McNeal's Quick Check, according to sources, is alcohol and malt liquor.

Critics say several convenience stores operating in this area are actually liquor stores under guise. When interviewed by the Sentinel-Voice, the majority placed the issue in economic terms, refusing to address it as a social concern. Some refused to comment and were evasive when asked about their responsibility to the community. Upon inspection, shocking inventories were discovered. Some stores had over 75% of their freezer space devoted to alcohol. One establishment carried so much malt liquor that it stored surplus in four large 50-gallon bins chilled under ice directly behind the counter. Several business owners, however, did feel a certain degree of responsibility when asked about their commitment to the community. Some suggested that if a coalition of store owners was formed, they would agree to control the quantities and types



"Crazy Horse" brand of malt liquor shows degrading aspects of ethnic marketing.

Photo by Victor Ingram/LVSV of liquor distributed.

Lewis Conner, owner of Seven Seas Restaurant, has operated a business in the West Las Vegas community for more than ten years. Conner said the current problems in the community do stem from a collapse in value, yet business owners must share in assuming part of that responsibility. He looks at the incredible consumption of alcohol within the community, which by his own estimates equates to 5000 cases per week within the West Las Vegas area alone, and he ponders the future of the youth. Conner's successful bar

and restaurant are adjacent to his recently opened package liquor store. He emphatically stated that responsible drinking is a necessity for all who wish to indulge in drinking, but problems arise when children attempt to make their "rites of passage" into adulthood by twisting off their first beer bottle. What contributes to the demand? Conner said direct marketing to Blacks provides an incredible vehicle for consumption. "I think it came from marketing-different companies marketing directly to the Black community." Such high profile celebrity endorsements include rapper Ice Cube, who markets St. Ives Malt liquor, and actor Billy D. Williams, who markets the King Cobra brand of liquor.

Additionally, Conner said the 40-ounce malt liquor's incredible potency also provides for huge demand. "32-ounce beers have been around for years and were designed for group and party consumption," said Conner, "when the 40-ounce came out, it was marketed to the single user." He said the amount is too excessive for one person at one

sitting. This, according to Conner, contributes to binge drinking by inexperienced drinkers, who on occasion find themselves unaware of their actions.

Other contributing factors include the mochoism associated with finishing a complete 40-ounce of beer and the horrible taste of beer once it is no longer chilled, which creates a desire to finish prior to losing flavor. Conner said packaged liquor, by design, was meant to be taken home and enjoyed in comfort and security.

Conner carries a limited inventory of the 40-ounce beer and also welcomes a coalition of owners to cooperatively control consumption. He also encourages the public to recognize overt marketing techniques of alcohol products. "As Blacks we need to study, go into other areas and make comparisons," said Conner. "We need to see if we can find St. Ives, Olde English, and King Cobra outside the West Las Vegas community." These more potent brands of malt liquor, according to Conner, are marketed exclusively to Blacks.

NEXT WEEK THE TRAGIC RESULTS OF BOOZE IN THE HOOD & PROPOSED SOLUTIONS



A refrigerator found at a local establishment shows a huge inventory of malt liquor. Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

DENNY CASE

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worst, be comparable to the 30-month sentences being served by the two former officers convicted of violating Rodney King's civil rights in the 1991 beating.

The jury acquitted Williams and co-defendant Henry Watson of the stiffest charges.

Watson, 29, pleaded guilty to assault on one deadlocked count and was convicted of one misdemeanor.

He was sentenced Tuesday to probation until January 1997, 320 hours of community service and a \$200 fine.

In January, the trial of Lance Jerome Parker — accused of firing a gun at the fuel tank of Denny's truck — begins. In March, King's civil suit against the city and police goes to court. And Denny is currently forging ahead with his plans to sue the city.

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