

Westside 7-Eleven closes its doors

By Nichole Davis
Sentinel-Voice

As development booms in West Las Vegas, the area's first and only 7-Eleven convenience store closed its doors permanently Tuesday due to declining sales. The 8-year-old store, at 900 N. Martin Luther King Blvd., was just not breaking even, said Bill Nolan, market manager for the Southland Corp., the chain's parent company.

"As soon as the apartment complex across the street (Marble Manor housing project due to renovations) closed in August 1995, we had a dramatic change in sales," Nolan said. "We lost a great deal of our customer base."

Sargit Heyer, the franchise owner of the store, said he lost nearly \$40,000 of his own money since he took over the site six months ago.

In addition to the closure, Heyer cited high rates of night-time theft as another reason he was forced to close the location. Each night, people would steal an undisclosed amount of alcohol, despite on-site security guards.

"My intention was to keep it going, and I did for six months," he said.

But earlier this month Heyer met with Southland officials and offered to give them back the location, which he himself chose.

"Business-wise, there were a lot of problems," he said, but "I'm so cleaned out. There was no way I could do it on my own."

Southland officials understood the numerous problems at the location which have also included shooting incidents in the parking lot that scared away customers and a costly fire that forced them to remodel the store a year ago.

Rather than pouring more money into a site that may not be profitable for quite some time, they decided to close the site, officials said.

"These are decisions that from time to time we have to make," Nolan said. "My intent was to do everything we could to make that store profitable, and it just didn't work."

The lone dissenter of the plan appears to be John Edmonds, the owner of the shopping plaza the store has anchored for the last 10 years.

Edmonds claims that Southland officials couldn't find a buyer for the store because they didn't adequately advertise the property, a charge Nolan denies.

"I asked the (market) manager (Nolan) how they had tried to get an African-American owner, and he said they put up a sign in the window," Edmonds said.

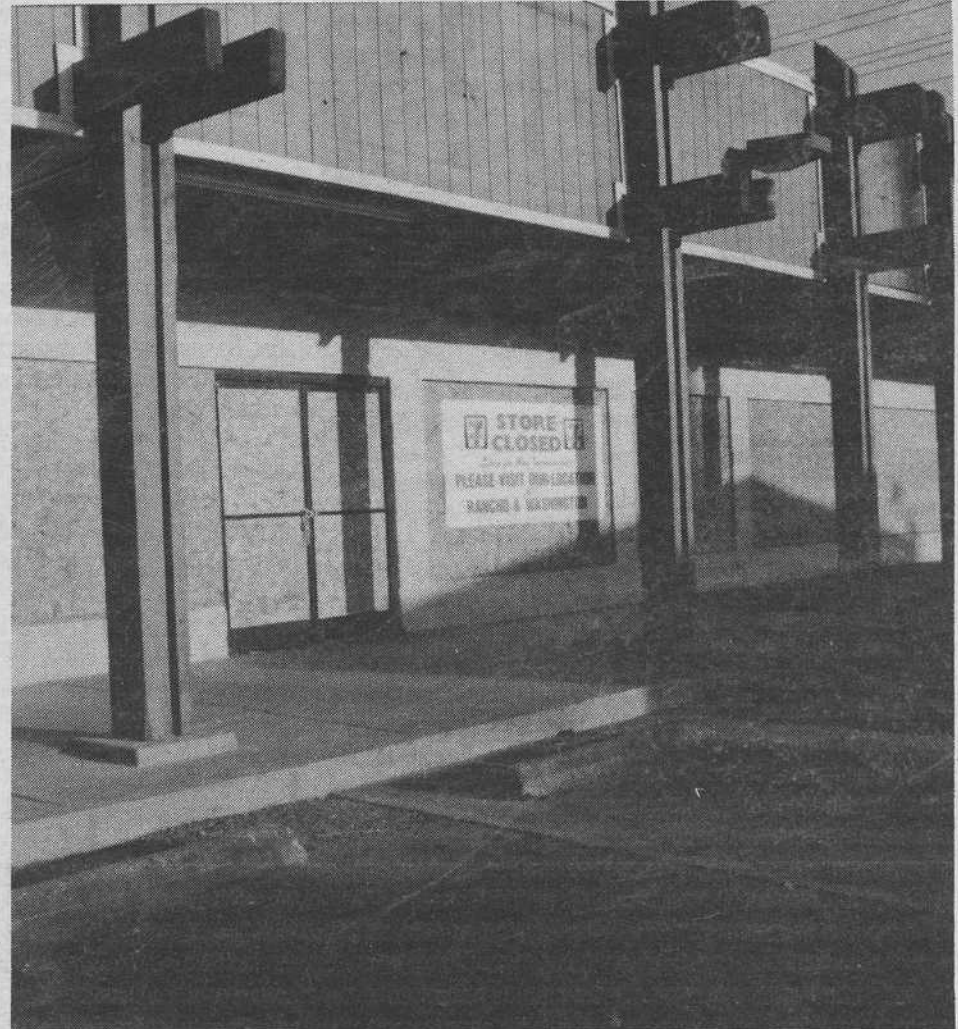
But how could they find a black buyer, the company did not advertise in any of the black media outlets?, he asked.

While Edmonds acknowledged the reported problems, he said, "it's a disappointment to people like myself who are trying to bring in development to the area to see a national chain pull out the way they did, for the reasons they did."

The impact of the closure on Edmonds' shopping center is not clear. Edmonds said the store's lease doesn't end for several months, so it should not affect his profits.

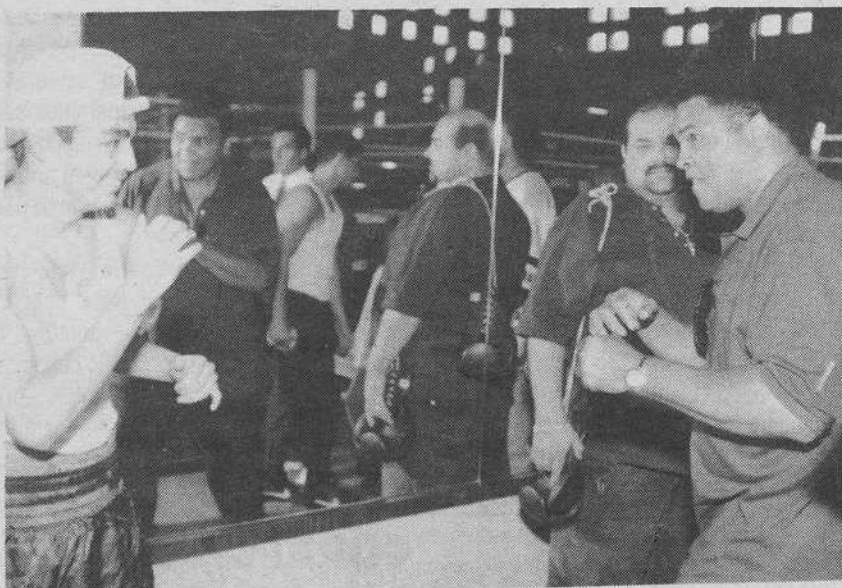
But for the other business owners who have relied on the foot traffic from the convenience store, neither Nolan nor Edmonds would predict the future.

Ironically, Heyer said he would consider coming back to the site once the Marble Manor reopens, because "I made many friends."



The store, at MLK and Washington Avenue closed down Tuesday after two different owners failed in their bid to make the business profitable. Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

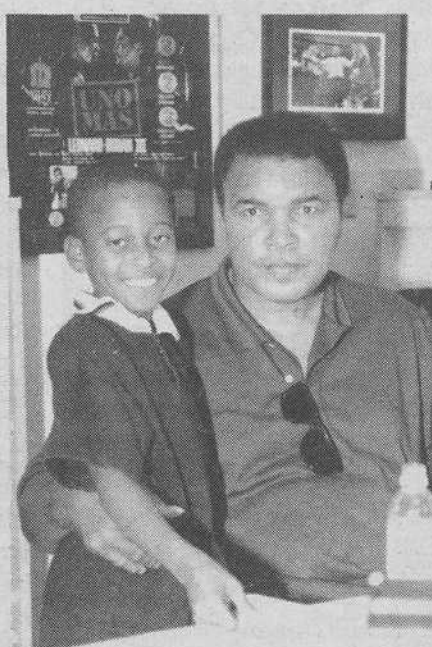
ALI TRADES JABS AND FUN



Former champ visits Nevada Partners

Muhammad Ali, the renowned former world heavyweight boxing champion shared laughs and love Tuesday with youngsters involved in the center's boxing program.

Photos by Savoy/LVS-Voice



Shakur suspect arrested

Special to the Sentinel-Voice

A Crips gang member, who was rounded up Wednesday during a Compton, Calif. police-led raid on 37 gang houses and hangouts in the Los Angeles area, faces charges in connection with last month's killing of hip hop artist Tupac Shakur.

Orlando Anderson, 22, of Compton, was taken into custody along with 12 others during the raids that involved 300 officers from the Compton and Long Beach police, the FBI, the Department of Justice and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department among others.

A New York radio station reported Wednesday that Anderson told police that Marion "Suge" Knight, the owner of Death Row Records and driver of the BMW in which Shakur was a passenger, was the target of the Sept. 7 drive-by shooting near the Las Vegas Strip.

Compton police said Anderson has ties to the Los Angeles Crips gang. Knight reportedly has ties to their rivals, the Los Angeles Bloods and sports an "M.O.B." tattoo on his arms which police

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