

Federal defender accuses Weed & Seed of targeting WLVB blacks

By Nichole Davis
Sentinel-Voice

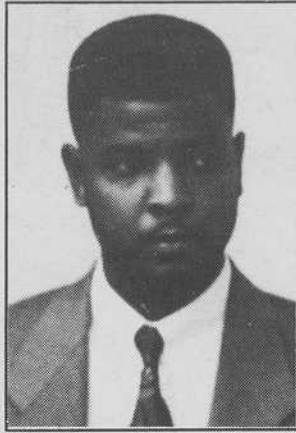
Federal defense attorneys for accused drug buyer Roy Dean Grace contend the Steering Committee of the Weed and Seed program targets West Las Vegas residents for special prosecution.

At issue is whether the committee has created a program which punishes neighborhood residents more harshly than they would otherwise be punished.

The Weed and Seed program uses federal sentencing guidelines, minimum sentencing, and pre-trial detention.

The motion, if allowed, could result in the release of more than 15 suspects arrested during an area drug sweep Sept. 25.

But the 23-page motion, which was filed



FRANKLIN SIMPSON

Oct. 1, has already caused a stir among locals, because it also labels local seeding efforts ineffective. Seeding manager Franklin Simpson also came under fire from print media in August for implementing his portion of the federally-funded initiative too slowly.

"Since the decision to target West Las Vegas, 100 percent of all defendants prosecuted in federal court by the Operation Weed and Seed Task Force have been Black

[sic]," wrote federal defender Franny Forsman.

"Little effort has been made to locate 'seeding' within the community, and the residents have been virtually excluded from the design or implementation of the program," wrote Forsman, who filed the motion on behalf

(See Targeting, Page 5)

African leaders launch grassroots re-election campaign for Clinton/Gore

Fully understanding that the African-American vote is central to his re-election, President Bill Clinton recently announced the formation of "African-Americans for Clinton/Gore '96" in 30 states.

President Clinton, during funeral services for the late Secretary of Commerce Ronald H. Brown, said had it not been for Brown and the black vote he would not be president. The President has often bragged about having more African-Americans and other minorities in his cabinet and administration than any other president in the history of the country.

In launching "African-Americans for Clinton/Gore '96", African-American leaders and political activists held a nationwide conference call in over 160 sites with President Clinton, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown, Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary, and Director of the Office of Management and Budget Frank Raines.

"African-Americans for Clinton/Gore '96" will

organize grassroots efforts in African-American communities to turn out a massive vote for the re-election of the Clinton/Gore ticket.

"Our biggest challenge," said Alan Wheat, Deputy Campaign Director for Clinton-Gore, "is making sure that African-American voters don't assume, based on the polls, that President Clinton will be a shoo-in and, therefore, their votes are not important.

We not only need a maximum black vote for President Clinton but also in those congressional and senatorial races where Democratic candidates are in contention. We stand an excellent chance of regaining control of both houses of the U.S. Congress.

This will mean having at least four members of the Congressional Black Caucus serving as chairpersons of highly influential committees and seven CBC members having seniority to serve as subcommittee chairpersons. This is the reality of black political empowerment."

Judge awards suit to county black fire fighters

Jackie Brantley
Sentinel-Voice

U.S. District Judge Mary Johnson Lowe has ordered, as a result of a suit by the Professional Black Fire Fighters of Clark County an award of \$660,000 from the Clark County Fire Department, stemming from a 1986 allegation of a pattern of racial discrimination and harassment.

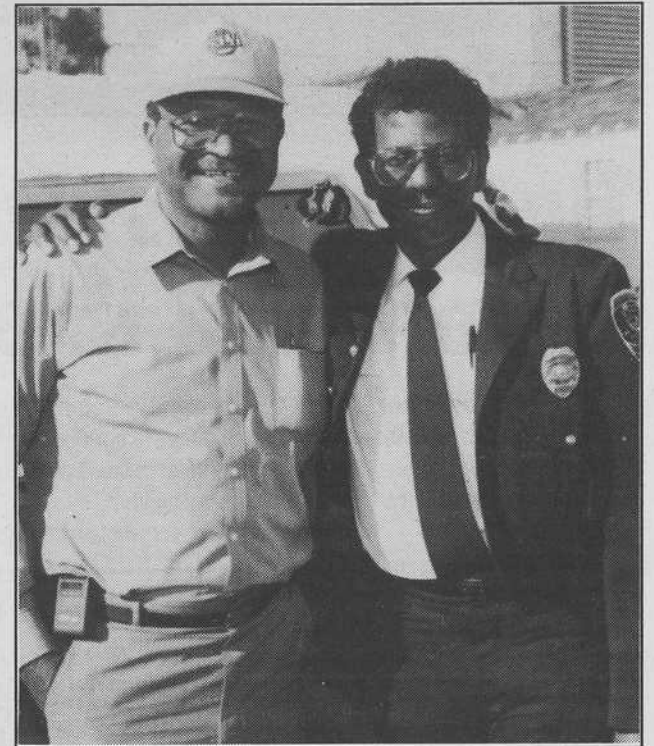
The order, dated September 20, concluded that, "The court hereby awards plaintiff (The Professional Black Fire Fighters of Clark County) \$660,000 in compensatory damages."

The award is one of the highest ever issued in the history of the state. The order came after, Lowe determined in a 62-page ruling dated April 1994, that for years, the civil rights of black fire fighters were violated by the department. In her ruling, Lowe said "black fire fighters were exposed to an unreasonably abusive or offensive work-related environment."

The order came nearly 12 years and over \$500,000 in legal fees for a positive reply from the courts.

The court will rule later on the issue of "remaining relief," to include entitlement to attorneys and expert witness fees."

Originally, the suit named the Local 1908 of the International Association of Fire Fighters as one of the defendants. Current president of Local 1908, Mark Balen, said that "the total membership of the union is 530



PBFFCC President Benny Scott, right, takes a moment outside the fire station with Jesse Scott, the group's first president, who enunciated the suit against the County Fire Dept.

Special to the Sentinel-Voice.

individuals." He was unsure of the breakdown of women and blacks in the union. "Benny Scott, president of the PBFF said, "although blacks makeup approximately 9% of the County Fire Dept, approximately 38 blacks have contributed over \$68,000 to the union in 3 years."

"The union represents all union members, unrespective of race and gender" said Balen. He contends, the local union did not expend any funds in support of the PBFF lawsuit, because "it was like sueing ourselves." Balen said that the union did, however, expend funds in opposition of

the PBFF's lawsuit. He did not know how much.

Scott said the fire fighters named Local 1908 in the suit to receive "full benefits, hiring appointments, and assistance in representation and negotiations, moreover, not for monetary awards." Scott said he felt "let down" because the union turned their backs on its black members when the heat was on."

Despite the previous, Scott said he will request of the union, a copy of all budgets and audits conducted within the last five

(See Suit, Page 5)

Law Firm of Smith & Williams

ATTORNEY AT LAW



TIMOTHY C. WILLIAMS

Timothy Williams is a member of the Nevada & Illinois State Bar, practicing primarily in personal injury cases.

COMBINED 27 YEARS OF LEGAL EXPERIENCE

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Neither the State Bar of Nevada nor any agency of the State Bar has certified any lawyer identified here as a specialist or expert. Anyone considering a lawyer should independently investigate the lawyer's credentials and ability.

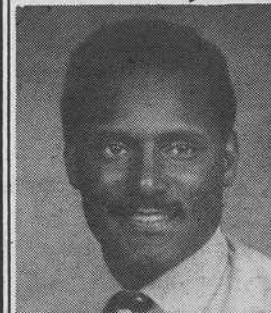
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