

LAS VEGAS

# Sentinel Voice

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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

## \$250,000 forged check tests Islamic faith in LV

### Former state drug czar conspires to defraud spiritual community

By Nichole Davis  
Sentinel-Voice

A battle for control of Masjid As-Sabur, the only predominately African-American mosque in the state, has ended with a vote of non-confidence aimed at ousting spiritual leader, Mujahid Ramadan.

In a closed door meeting Wednesday, the executive board of the 711 West Morgan Ave. mosque voted to ask Ramadan to step down as the imam or spiritual leader of the community, because he withdrew \$250,000 from a mosque account Monday, using a check with forged signatures.

Ramadan, who is also the executive director of Nevada Partners, re-deposited the money Tuesday after

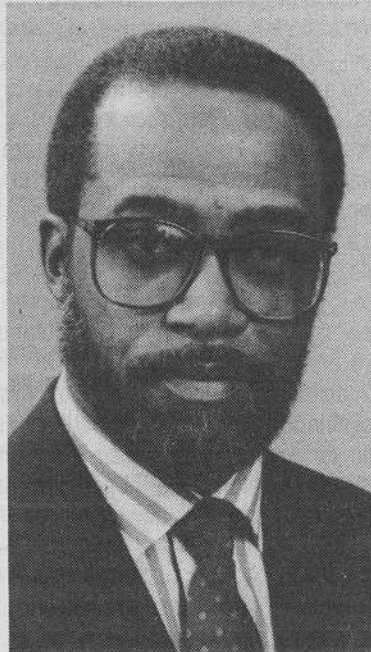
"thinking the matter over," he said.

Ramadan did not make the decision to withdraw the money alone. Imam Posey and at least two other unnamed persons - the legal incorporators of the mosque - decided to withdraw the money last week following months of bickering about policy decisions in the mosque.

Hostilities began several months ago when mosque member and boxing promoter Akbar Muhammad requested financial records for the last five years, he said, but complete records were never provided.

In addition, Muhammad questioned the use of mosque monies to host a benefit/fundraiser for boxing legend Muhammad Ali, because honorary co-chairs for the event worked in the casino industry. Gaming is forbidden in the Muslim faith.

"This is not the way of Islam. It is not based upon the Quran, nor is it based upon the life of our holy prophet," Muhammad said. Besides, "it is our



MAJAHID RAMADAN

Islamic right to question our leaders" when their decisions are questionable.

But "I don't see the gaming in conflict with Islam," Ramadan said Tuesday.

"We have people who work in the industry, but we don't gamble."

Muhammad went to Imam W. Deen Mohammed, one of the most respected African-American Islamic leaders, to request the fundraiser be canceled on spiritual grounds. His request was granted.

Additionally, Muhammad said he suspected funds were being mishandled, so he asked for financial records in numerous board meetings but received only a report for January to August 1996. Ramadan disputes that saying every record Muhammad requested was made available for his review inside the mosque along with staff.

The final showdown was a recent verbal exchange inside the mosque at the end of prayer services recently. Muhammad interrupted individual prayers when he loudly asked the imam for financial records, witnesses said.

Ramadan then told him to go the finance committee instead of

approaching him inside the mosque. When he continued to yell and accused Ramadan of stealing money without proof, Muhammad was asked to leave the mosque, said Nadir Abdul Masjid, the executive board's legal advisor.

With the full cooperation of the masjid's executive board, Ramadan then had an order of protection served on Muhammad Oct. 9th barring him from both the mosque and Nevada Partners.

What happened next is not totally immediately clear, but both sides say members of the mosque were prepared to ask Ramadan to step down from his unpaid position as spiritual leader.

Although this request was never formally issued, the individuals who incorporated the non-profit facility and continue to pay licensing fees each year, decided to withdraw the funds last week at least temporarily, Posey said. Neither Posey nor Samesha Ramadan, the imam's wife, would provide a date

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### Vikki Buckley to speak at Frederick Douglas dinner

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Colorado Secretary of State and Republican activist Vikki Buckley will give the keynote address at the third annual Frederick Douglass Dinner at the Stardust Hotel and Casino, October 24.

The Douglass dinner is held each year to honor the achievements of the trailblazing abolitionist. Born in 1818 to parents of mixed heritage, Douglass, a slave, taught himself how to read and later escaped from the South.

He toured the country and the world giving speeches about the horrors of the peculiar institution during the 1840's and wrote a book, *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass*, which initially forced him to go into hiding to avoid capture by slave hunters.

Upon his return to the U.S. in 1847, Douglass launched anti-slavery newspaper, the *North Star*, which was eventually renamed *Frederick Douglass' Newspaper*. The paper spearheaded women's rights and the abolition of slavery through government means.

Douglass urged free blacks to fight for the Union Army at the start of the Civil War and went on to serve as advisor to President Abraham Lincoln. In later years he continued to give speeches and published more books. He died February 20, 1895 shortly after attending a women's rights rally. He was approximately 77 years old.

In remembrance of Douglass, Buckley, the first women and black Republican of either gender to hold Colorado's secretary of state office, will speak  
(See Dinner, Page 9)



### Ride 'em cowboy

Nick Buckley, the lone African American in the Professional Bull Riders 1996 World Finals, holds on tight during his preliminary ride held at the MGM Grand Garden this past weekend.

Photo by Jonathan Olsen/Front Row Photos

### WCBPA Las Vegas bound for 13th annual convention

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The West Coast Black Publishers Association will host its 13th annual convention October 23-26, at the Monte Carlo in Las Vegas and Brian Townsend, president of the organization is looking forward to a full slate of activities for the publishers.

Townsend, a publisher of two Southern California weekly newspapers, *The Precinct Reporter* and *Tri-County Bullentin*, said "WCBPA is committed to objectively publishing and reporting the news of the Black community which would otherwise go unnoticed. At the same time, we are able to send a message of hope for improving the economic and social conditions for our people." He continued "through various convention workshops and seminars, the association has developed and implemented methods to become a more powerful influence within the community. We have survived because we have something special to offer that other newspapers do not. Our publications are a crusading medium, and WCBPA is the concerned voice of the African American community."

One of the guiding principles of the organization is, "information is the catalyst for change." WCBPA member publishers know that the print media is imperative for African Americans are to remain informed and empowered in order to succeed against seemingly insurmountable odds in society. WCBPA has invested such African American concerns as affirmative action, police brutality, job discrimination and adequate health care for people of color.

(See Convention, Page 9)