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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

Gang members uneasy after shooting

Ramon Savoy
Sentinel-Voice

Members of a local Latin gang expressed their frustration and distrust with Las Vegas police this week, only days after an off-duty Metro officer is accused of killing a fellow member in a drive-by shooting.

Young people loitered about the door of 21-year-old Daniel Mendoza's apartment at 537 McKeller Circle on New Year's Day still mourning their friend's murder.

According to police and eyewitness accounts, two men in a blue pickup, who are accused to be officer Ron Mortenson and another policeman whose name has not been released, drove up in an alley of the neighborhood near Paradise and Flamingo roads about 1 a.m. on Dec. 28.

Mortenson, who has been arrested and charged with murder with a deadly weapon, is alleged to have fired six shots one of which struck Mendoza in the chest. The young man stumbled to the steps outside his home, collapsed and died.

Mortenson, who made his initial court appearance Tuesday, has so far been denied bail. Sheriff Jerry Keller and other officers have publicly expressed their dismay over the incident.

"To my knowledge, we have not had a Metro officer charged in a murder before," Keller said. "It shakes this agency to its very heels."

Mortenson, a Metro officer for 16 months, was stationed at the Southwest Area Command at Jones Boulevard and Spring Mountain Road.

Gang members are still wondering why it had

to happen in the first place.

"When they came up in the alley, they called him over and several of the homies warned (Mendoza) that they were cops," said neighborhood resident "Sleepy" who asked that his last name not be used.

"When he went over there, (Mendoza) saw that the cop pulled out the gun and he ran. And when he ran, the cop just blasted him," Sleepy said.

"They said the two officers were coming from a party," he said. "And right after they blasted him they went to another party."

Since the shooting, neighbors have held car washes and collected donations to help Mendoza's father who wishes to have his son's body sent back to Mexico for burial.

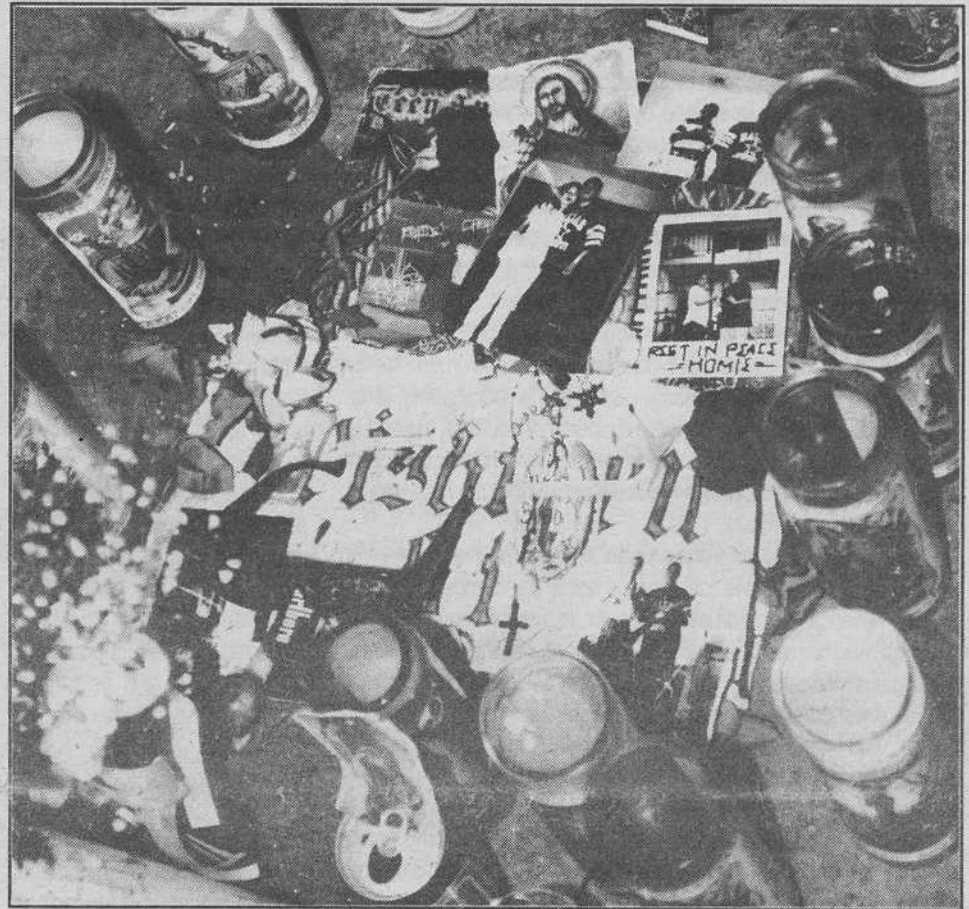
A memorial service is set for Saturday from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Desert Memorial Funeral Home, 1111 N. Las Vegas Blvd.

"We just want to pay our respect for him and do what we can to help his family," the young man said.

"Everytime I see an officer now I'm going to be scared and I don't even know if he is going to blast me, you know.

"That's messed up. They ask us why we run, why not? When they stop us they beat us up, treat us like animals and now they're even killing us.

"Now we can't even trust the police anymore," said Sleepy who has lived in the neighborhood for three years. "Yes we're gang members but we don't go out looking for trouble. I don't know what that cop was thinking when he came here blasting."



Votive candles surround the bloodstained doorstep where Daniel Mendoza died. An off-duty Las Vegas police officer is charged with his murder. Pictures of the victim and his girlfriend, cigarettes and other religious symbols were placed at another memorial near Mendoza's apartment.

Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

New schools to welcome LV students

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Eight new elementary schools will open their doors for the first time this January, including four scheduled to open Monday, January 6.

The four are among nine new elementary schools opening mid-year 1996-97. The first one, Vanderburg Elementary School, opened in December; four more will follow throughout January. These schools are funded by the 1994 \$605 million bond issue, which will yield 19 elementary schools, three middle schools and three high schools, as well as thousands of improvement projects to existing schools.

Elementary schools opening Monday, January 6, are Richard Bryan, Roger Bryan, Dan Goldfarb and Aggie Roberts. Following is a list of their opening day activities:

- **Richard Bryan Elementary School**, 8050 Cielo Vista Ave., southwest of Buffalo and Lake Mead Boulevard—Opening ceremonies will begin at 8:45 a.m. featuring a performance by the Becker Middle School band and a welcome by U.S. Sen. Richard Bryan, for whom the school is named.



Richard H. Bryan Elementary School is set to open January 6. Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

School tours will be conducted by fifth graders. For more information, call 799-1460.

- **Roger Bryan Elementary School**, 8255 Katie Ave., southwest of Buffalo and Spring Mountain—The 9 a.m. opening day activities will include a flag ceremony, performance by the school honor choir and a ribbon-cutting ceremony. School tours and refreshments will be available all day. In addition, to accommodate as many parents as possible, an open house will also be held from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, January 7. For more information, call 799-1270.

- **Dan Goldfarb Elementary School**, 1651 Orchard Valley Drive, southwest of Charleston

and Hollywood—An informal open house is planned from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, January 4. A ribbon cutting ceremony will be held at 9:05 a.m. Friday, January 10. For more information, call 799-1550.

- **Aggie Roberts Elementary School**, 227 Charter Oak St., northwest of Windmill and Pecos in Henderson—Activities will begin at 8:45 a.m. with a performance by the Silverado High School band and cheerleaders. Beginning at 9:05 a.m., the following activities will take place: a group of Boy Scouts will lead the Pledge of Allegiance, students will sing "Home Mean Nevada," school

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Redistricting strategies questioned

By Eric H. Kearney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Prior to this year's congressional elections, it seemed pretty clear that African-American candidates would find it difficult, if not impossible, to win in white majority districts. However, with the results of election counted, that premise has been challenged and the strategy for redistricting must be modified, or changed completely.

As has been well-documented in every African-American newspaper in the country, the United States Supreme Court attacked majority African-American districts in Georgia, Texas, and North Carolina. The Supreme Court determined that the districts were created for the sole purpose of electing more African Americans and Latinos to Congress. Proponents of the districts, supported by years of racial animosity, both anecdotal and documented, said that whites would not vote for African-Americans or Latinos. So, the only way to ensure African-American and Latino representation in Congress was to create "majority, minority"

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