

LAS VEGAS

Sentinel



Voice

VOLUME 18, ISSUE 42

GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.

February 19, 1998

"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

KCEP's top man eyed for ouster

By John T. Stephens III
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Tempers flared on both sides during a Valentine's Day "fact-finding mission" to determine whether Sherman Rutledge should keep his job. Critics blasted the KCEP-FM 88.1 general manager's leadership style and programming.

Pro-Rutledge forces chided the naysayers, saying the station is an integral part of the community.

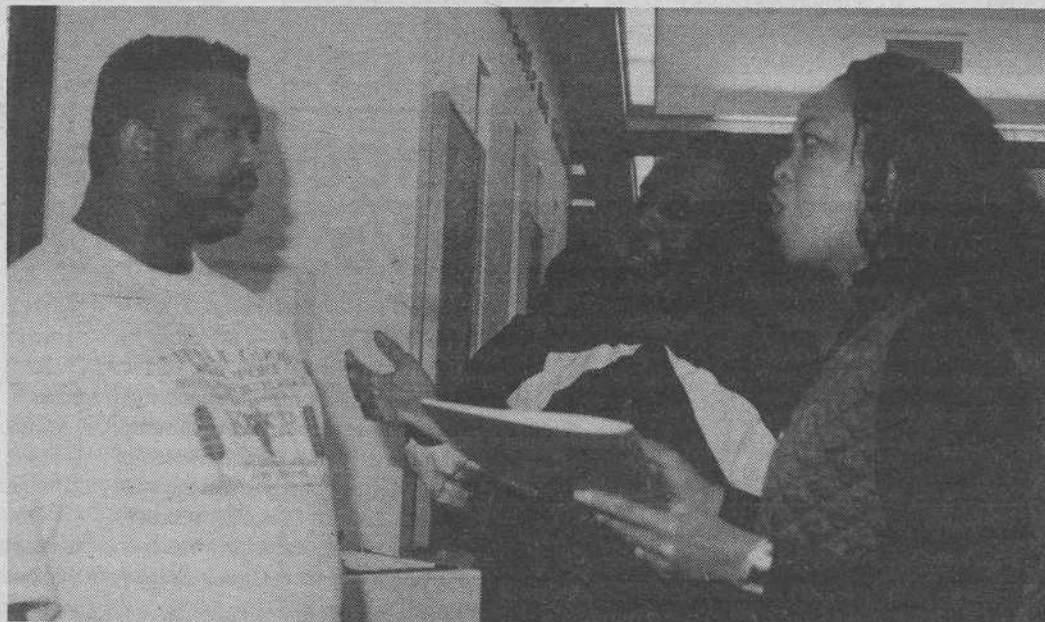
A flyer titled, "Do You Know? KCEP G.M. Sherman Rutledge Must Go!" sparked the controversy. The flyer, circulated to media outlets citywide charged Rutledge with: withholding vital information from the community, scant programming celebrating Black History Month, possibly cancelling popular community shows and causing several on-air personalities to ponder quitting.

"There is an injustice being perpetrated on this community by KCEP," said former state assemblyman Gene Collins during the Feb. 14 forum convened by the NAACP, WAAK-UP, the Martin Luther King Committee, and the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Oppression to clear the air.

"This is a fact finding mission," the Rev. James Rogers, president of the local NAACP chapter said. "KCEP is a community based radio station where most if not all the information disseminated to the African-American community comes from."

But Rutledge's supporters felt like the forum was a witch hunt.

"Why did they have to do this on Black History Month?" David Wallace said, who



KCEP-FM 88.1 volunteer Dave Wallace, former state assemblyman Gene Collins and Linda Howard, first vice president of the Las Vegas branch of the NAACP debate on whether or not the urban radio station's general manager, Sherman Rutledge, should be removed from his position. (Below) More than a dozen youth listen as Rutledge's critics and supporters voiced their opinions.

works as a volunteer at the radio station. Wallace is the ex-Metro Police youth counselor who was charged with insubordination and was later terminated. "The fact is there are no facts," Wallace said.

The biggest gripes concerned programming.

Critics harped on what they see as a dearth of programming devoted to education, local African-American news and national stories on



Blacks.

"It's one thing to play entertaining music, but when it comes to dealing with controversy issues ... they are silenced," said Minister Duke Muhammad of Muhammad Mosque #75.

WAAK-UP President Marzette Lewis said she was told her firebrand

style stifled her chances of getting air time. "I was told that I was too radical and that

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Tenn. mayor to examine KKK moves

By Gale Jones Carson
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Although agreeing that the First Amendment guarantees freedom of expression and assembly, Memphis Mayor Willie Herenton revealed recently that he is consulting with attorneys to find ways of limiting the rights of people who jeopardize the safety and well-being of city residents.

In a letter he wrote about the Church of American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan's rally held in Memphis last month, Herenton said, "Although I remain an advocate of free speech and assembly, I am compelled to implement measures against the activities of those who jeopardize the safety and well-being of the citizens of this community. No one has the right — constitutional guarantees notwithstanding — to place this city and its citizens on the slippery slope to chaos and disaster."

Herenton is also working with a battery of lawyers who are researching and advising him on what he can and can't do. "I am going to know every possible legal remedy that we have in the event this happens again," he said. Herenton has come under fire for allowing the Klan march, which ended with police using tear gas on anti-Klan demonstrators.

Meanwhile, at Herenton's request Memphis' City Attorney Robert Spence Jr. has drafted a 12-page proposed ordinance that provides the city with a mechanism to control the time, place and manner of assembly. According to Spence, the proposal, which must be approved by the City Council, also speaks directly to the conduct of people who want to assemble and hold parades. "They must be in compliance with the ordinance," he said.

The task of implementing the ordinance will fall to Memphis Police Director Walter Winfrey, (See Memphis, Page 4)

Part of Winfrey case tossed

Citing law, case ruled common law-business defamation

Special to Sentinel-Voice

AMARILLO, Texas — Citing a state "veggie libel" law, but without explaining how it affects the case, a federal judge ruled Tuesday that Texas cattlemen don't have a case against Oprah Winfrey based on the law which protects perishable food products.

But, U.S. District Judge Mary Lou Robinson did not throw the case out as defendants had requested and jurors returned to hear the lawsuit as a common-law business defamation case.

Originally the first test of the state's 1995 so-called "veggie libel" law, designed to protect food from false and defamatory statements, the case now becomes an ordinary business disparagement trial. The major difference: cattlemen now have a heavier burden of proof.

Now, it appears, the prosecution must prove

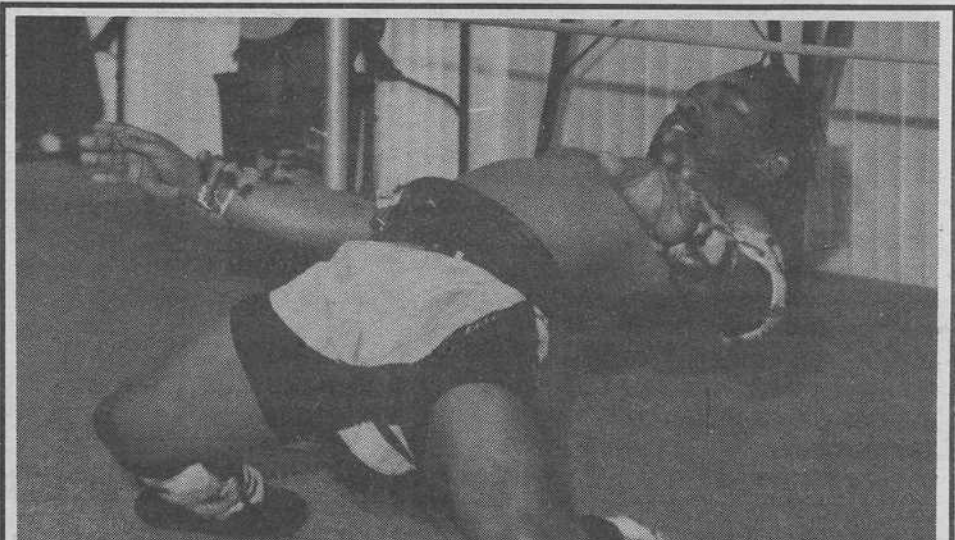
Winfrey, her production company and a vegetarian activist guest on her April 16, 1996, show meant to hurt the beef industry. Under the 1995 law, they only had to prove knowingly false statements were made.

Robinson ruled after a day of arguments outside the presence of the jury over defense motions to end the trial. Her decision was not accompanied by a written order.

Winfrey's lawyers had reiterated their stance that statements made on the show about dangerous foods — which probed whether the British epidemic mad cow disease posed a threat to U.S. beef consumers — didn't unfairly disparage U.S. beef.

Texas cattlemen countered that the program caused cattle prices to plunge. They said the

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How low can you go?

Sentinel-Voice photo by Randy Merritt

Limbo expert Solomon Kuria, a Bantu Warrior, had the audience reaching for their chiropractor's telephone number as he exhibited his talents Wednesday at the Nevada Power Company Black History Month Celebration that included singing, dancing, and lots of food.