

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

Run-off races to decide future city

The man tabbed to lead Las Vegas into the new millennium will be chosen Tuesday as Las Vegas two choices, 12-year City Councilman Arnie Adamsen and 35-year criminal defense attorney Oscar Goodman, square off in a run-off election.

It's a race that has captured favor among media pundits nationally and even in Europe and which has become the most expensive campaign in city history, topping the a late '80s mayoral contest involving Bob Stupak and Ron Lurie that generated a combined \$705,000.

The race involves a typical scenario: a political incumbent and experienced insider against a colorful, sometimes quirky political novice, government-issue solutions versus private sector-solutions.

It's also a battle of images. Adamsen can take credit for things great and small. He's championed the master-planned growth that has spawned top-notch communities like Summerlin and Green Valley, sat on the council during a time of explosive growth, economic diversification and increased emphasis on recreation.

During the period, the city has also made inglorious missteps: funding a now-defunct lighted art project at City Hall, spending thousands on worthless studies that confirm what people already knew and funneling a generous share of projects away from capable in-state firms.

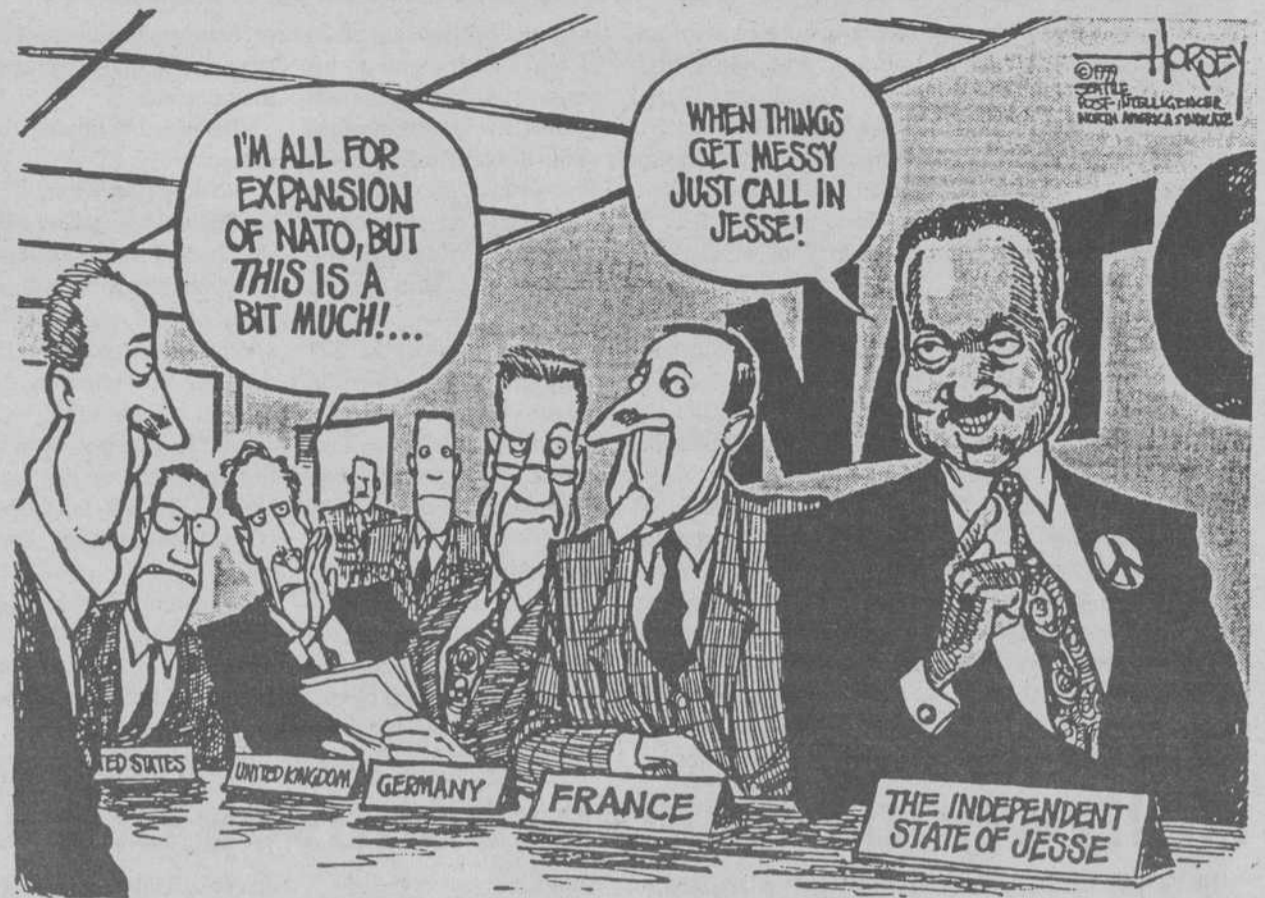
Similarly, Goodman can claim preeminence in the field of criminal defense. If not preeminence, then at least media eminence. He is good at what he does, but what he does rubs some people the wrong way. The man who once denied the existence of the mob has defended some of the most notorious members of La Cosa Nostra — and is living to tell about it. More than few folks think mob guys are scum. Call it guilt by association.

Goodman readily admits he's green on several issues and acknowledges a learning curve exists should he win on June 8. He's media-savvy but less polished and his answers are less rehearsed. Adamsen, a rather low-key councilman, is a polished fact-spitting machine. Neither is the affable, well-spoken Jan Laverty Jones. — the former car saleswoman and auto executive brought unprecedented attention to Las Vegas, stumping for the city across in locales near and far.

May the best man win.

Reese - Experience counts

Even if Nevada Stupak doesn't unseat Ward 3 Councilman Gary Reese, his energy is refreshing. Not to demean Reese's accomplishments which include millions in renovations for low-income housing and recreational centers, Stupak has shaken things up. Inasmuch as he's a newcomer to politics, his ideas aren't new: he plans on talking to people to find out their needs and promises to be the mouthpiece for the average Joe. But his energy can't replace experience and that's what needed with a new mayor and a new councilman.



Admission tumbles 'blue wall of silence'

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The swaggering pretense of innocence of New York City police officer Justin A. Volpe ended last week in a Brooklyn Federal courtroom.

Faced with the overwhelming evidence of his depraved sexual assault on Abner Louima, an innocent man, Volpe was forced to declare his guilt and to thereby admit that he's not fit for the company of decent people.

Volpe admitted that he beat Louima, a Haitian immigrant he had wrongly arrested after a fracas two years ago outside a Brooklyn nightclub, while transporting him to the local police station house. And he admitted that, once there, he marched a handcuffed Louima, his trousers around his ankles, into a bathroom, sodomized him with a broom handle and then thrust the stick in the injured man's mouth breaking several of his teeth.

This was the behavior of a savage, an individual who is not fit for the company of decent people.

Volpe's brief, flat declaration of guilt was devoid of remorse or of any acknowledgment of the pain and suffering, he caused an innocent man. The *New York Times* reported that the Reverend Al Sharpton, who was sitting with Louima's mother in the courtroom, used one word to describe Volpe's statement. He called it "chilling."

If the trial had continued and he had been found guilty,

To Be Equal

By Hugh B. Price
President
National Urban League



Volpe could have been sentenced to life in prison. Now, his sentence will be less, but legal experts say the minimum sentence for his crimes is likely to be at least 30 years. So be it.

Four other New York City police officers, charged in connection with the assault, remain on trial. Like Volpe, they are white.

There are some who, from the beginning of this horrific case, have quickly declared that the assault on Abner Louima was so unusual that no generalizations can be drawn from it.

Well, they are right in one sense: This was a police beating of "unusual" brutality. This was the work of a sociopath who deserves no mercy.

But it is not correct to say that no generalizations can be drawn from it.

To understand that, one need only remember what happened to Patrick Antoine, another Haitian immigrant, who was at the nightclub that fateful night, but had no connection with Louima and had not been involved in the melee that had brought the police racing there.

of color as the attack on Louima itself.

This is not super-heated rhetoric.

The Louima trial opened this month against the backdrop of a nationwide protest of African-Americans and other people of color, and of whites, of several singular, controversial acts of questionable police force across the country. That led to increased attention to police policy decisions and practices that have turned the phrases "driving while black" and "racial profiling" into commonly-understood argot.

They have also made two things unmistakably clear.

One is that, in its specific, horrible details, the brutalization of Abner Louima was an aberration.

The second is the false arrest of Abner Louima, and of Patrick Antoine, were not aberrations.

Rather, they were part of a widespread pattern of police misconduct under which hundreds of thousands of

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NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.
Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc.
900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104
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Fax (702) 380-8102

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Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association
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