



# 'Banking While Black' victim sues Metro cops

Al Triche  
Sentinel-Voice

Julian Reinhardt, a 30-year old, bespectacled, soft-spoken African-American man, may not fit the "profile" of a bank robber, but profiling compelled him to appear at a press conference this week. While Reinhardt said very little, others said plenty, outraged over his treatment by local police.

"To hell with what (Sheriff) Jerry Keller says, these cops ought to be in jail," said one. "I think the police in Clark County need to be educated," declared another.

Said attorney John Costo: "On November 27, 2000, Metro police created a new crime: 'Banking While Black'"

That day, Reinhardt was a customer- the only black customer- at US Bank on 4320 E. Tropicana when it was robbed by armed men, de-

scribed as African-American. The robbers escaped, but Reinhardt says Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department officers responding to the incident treated him not as a victim, but as one of the perpetrators.

Local attorneys and state and national representatives of the American Civil Liberties Union, which are representing Reinhardt, were joined by a group of about 25 community leaders and their supporters outside the Lloyd George Federal Courthouse on Monday. Their purpose: to see "that Mr. Reinhardt's rights are vindicated and that racial profiling more generally is ended."

Reinhardt is suing Keller and Metro, saying they violated the U.S. Constitution and several state laws by treating him as a criminal, for no reason other than because he is black.



Sentinel-Voice photo by John Stephens III  
Julian Reinhardt speaks at a press conference about his arrest by Las Vegas Police. He claims he was jailed unfairly.

When contacted, the Sheriff's Office indicated Keller was out of town. Metro typically declines to comment on lawsuits that are pending.

Filed on July 5 in U.S. District Court, the lawsuit targets Keller, the department, Metro officer F. Laythorpe and other as yet unnamed defendants, charging them with violations of civil rights, false imprisonment, battery, infliction of emotional distress, and defamation, and it demands a trial by jury.

The complaint says there was no probable cause nor reasonable suspicion to believe Reinhardt had committed a crime. Despite that, and, it says, "based solely on (Reinhardt's) African-American ethnicity," Laythorpe and others searched Reinhardt's belongings; handcuffed him in full view of the bank's customers

and employees; frisked, then arrested him and placed him in a police vehicle. He was "driven around with other arrestees for approximately four to five hours, without food, water, or access to a toilet," it continues, saying after that, they threw him in jail.

Reinhardt spent 18 hours in the Clark County Detention Center before posting bail, charged with obstructing a police officer. It was later dismissed, but his attorneys say the charge "was purely a pretext" for unlawfully arresting and detaining him.

Clearly embarrassed even to discuss the experience, Reinhardt called it "humiliating."

The suit asks for compensatory and punitive damages, attorney's fees and court costs, and although his attorney (See Victim, Page 3)



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy  
Las Vegas Black Panther leader Party Ron Current said the group will march on the Strip to protest disinvestment.

## Black Panthers: Protest on Strip is 'on'

Al Triche  
Sentinel-Voice

The head of the Las Vegas Black Panther Party, having recently contemplated leaving the organization, appeared reinvigorated yesterday.

He will not only retain his post but will also continue organizing a protest demonstration to be held in about six weeks here in Las Vegas.

Dismayed by a lack of response from government

leaders to his call for immediate economic improvements in West Las Vegas, Party Chairman Ron Current held a press conference Wednesday morning at the West Las Vegas Library.

He announced that plans to conduct the protest, over conditions on the westside and failure of city, county and state officials to intervene, will proceed.

The Panthers had given Governor Kenny Guinn until

July 15 to organize a conference of social service agencies and to develop a plan of action for revitalizing the community.

Despite Current's relationship with Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman, which deteriorated weeks ago when Panthers expressed their desires to Goodman in the form of demands, the mayor had reluctantly agreed to participate.

He did so providing Guinn

took the initiative to call for the conference, but there's been no response from Carson City.

"We expected it," said Current. "We expected not to hear from the city (or) the county, we expected not to hear from the state," he said, although Panthers had indicated that the deadline represented a point-of-no-return.

"We are now in absolute protest stage," proclaimed (See Panthers, Page 7)

## Ex-felon working to repatriate, reintegrate, revitalize peers

By Nancy Watson  
Sentinel-Voice

Once described as a "one man gang," Shawn Smith, also known as S-Man, has evolved into a one man social service agency. His specialties are people like him, ex-offenders, ex-cons, felons and young people headed in that direction.

It's Smith's heart that leads him to help others. To keep them from the traps that snared him.

Smith was busted for drug crimes in 1988 and spent ten years in federal prison. During those first moments of

incarceration he vowed he would not make the same mistake twice. He hasn't.

S-Man was well known and well liked "back in the day." A large man and a fire-arm expert, he often worked as a security guard for specific people and for clubs.

"You didn't even think anybody might bother you when the S-Man was around," said Ramon Savoy who managed radio station KCEP's fundraisers during the 1980s in West Las Vegas where Smith was the security officer at the nightclubs.

It was the same club, West

Side Story, where S-Man met the person who turned his head the wrong way.

Lisbon "Butch" Hall had it all. He had fancy clothes, fancy cars, jewelry and rolls of money. He was reputed to be one of the biggest crack dealers in the area.

They connected at the club and while working out. Within a short time, S-Man was working security for Hall.

A weight lifter, Smith weighed about 300 pounds. And, he had the guns. As security for Hall, he just stayed in the background and

was paid well for his work.

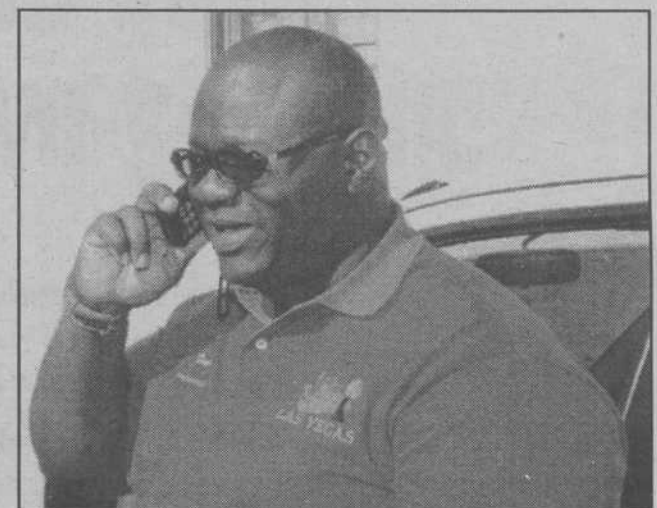
"I could take it (money) out of my pocket and flip off six or seven bills and say, 'here.' I wouldn't even know what denomination the bills were. It didn't matter," he said.

Smith liked the money and it felt good to be able to spread it around. He liked living large.

"My head was turned by the wrong things. I made a bad decision," he said.

In 1988, authorities caught up with him. He was busted during a sting operation con-

(See S-Man, Page 7)



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy  
Shawn Smith is seeking to re-enfranchise ex-felons.