

OUR VIEW

Here We Go...

This editorial was written with a heavy heart. Michael Chambliss has been a longtime community stalwart, a champion to many and a friend to most. Last week, his life took an unfortunate twist. Chambliss and Vincent Ekeoba Moses, a 26-year-old Nigerian boxer allegedly got into an altercation at a 7-Eleven on Charleston Boulevard and Torrey Pines. What we know definitively is that a life was lost, Moses'. What we don't know definitively—despite the newspaper reports and television segments—is what led to this unfortunate set of circumstances and where the blames lies.

What we can't shake is the feeling that this story is being reported with particular glee by folks in the media who've never much liked Mr. Chambliss, who seem all too eager to play judge and jury in the court of public opinion, who'd like nothing better than to filet Mr. Chambliss during what is obviously a trying time for him and his family and a painfully sad time for Moses' loved ones.

Of particular concern is how the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, the state's paper of record, is covering the story. Sure, news is news and newspapers are supposed to report it. Fine. No problem there. But there's also a place for ecumenical judgment in a newsroom—taking the higher ground. When news of Moses' death first surfaced, it wasn't front-page news. So why does it become front-page news now that Chambliss, who is no longer in the "limelight," is charged with attempted murder? Had John Q. Public been implicated in such a case, would it warrant front-page play? No. If a truly high-profile official, say a politician or wealthy scion or a celebrity had been implicated, would it warrant front-page billing? Maybe yes, maybe no. But if the person has been out of the limelight and divorced for years from the position and influence that generated the notoriety, then what makes such a story front-page worthy?

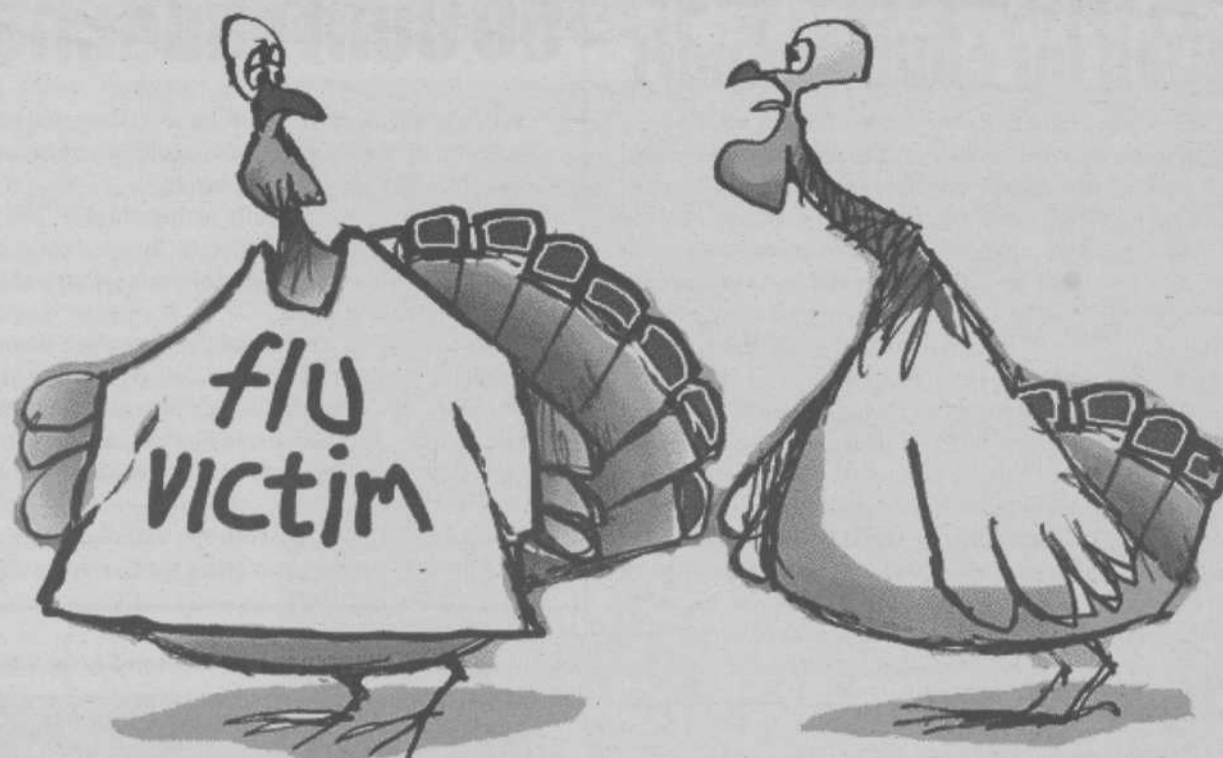
Wednesday's *R-J* article contains a sample of the pot-holes that have been pounded into this story: "A native of Alabama, Chambliss came to Las Vegas when his uncle, former County Commissioner William Pearson, helped him get a job. Chambliss worked for Las Vegas Neighborhood Services and was a paid political consultant who managed County Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates' 2004 campaign. He is also the founder of Fighting AIDS in Our Community Today, a nonprofit group that targets its services to black communities."

Why is it important to mention that Chambliss' uncle helped him get a job? Let's not get started on nepotism in Clark County. Were this outlawed, you could probably fill the Thomas & Mack Center with folks who wouldn't have their jobs if not for a family hook-up.

Tuesday's *R-J* story actually does a better job of mentioning Chambliss' extensive community involvement and even includes kind quotes from university system Regent Linda Howard. But the latter part of the story focuses on business dealings that have drawn scrutiny. While it isn't a reporter's duty to skewer stories—the fact is some Chambliss' business deals have raised reporters' eyebrows—neither is adding information that isn't germane to the story part of the job description.

Every time Mayor Oscar Goodman gets in a public tiff over something, checkered parts of his past haven't been brought up in the newspaper. If he were implicated in a death, would reporters recall his bouts of nepotism—promoting his son Ross' business at a national conference of mayors? Would they question his gin contract and why half the money is being funneled to his wife's private school, which doesn't need financial help? Would they bring up the stink surrounding the city's we'll-scratch-your-back-but-you-don't-have-to-scratch-ours land deal with land baron Billy Walters? Would they highlight his commiseration with known mob figures and folks in Nevada's Black Book of persons restricted from entering casinos?

Get the drift? One has nothing to do with the other. All this to say that we don't expect the *R-J* to be sensitive. It never has on stories involving Blacks on the wrong side of the law. Chambliss isn't the first to not receive a fair shake. We're sure he won't be the last.



"HEY, IT'S WORTH A TRY."

Protect kids from sex predators

By Dora LaGrande
Sentinel-Voice

During the past two weeks, KTNV Channel 13 and their investigative reporter Glen Meeks conducted an Internet sting using a rented house and a vigilante group called Perverted Justice who poses as children in online chat rooms to detect sexual predators who contact girls online and then go to make physical contact with vulnerable youngsters.

In less than two days, 11 men came to the house to meet, who they believed, was a young girl. The men, obviously, had no fear of reprisal. They had no idea whether the teenagers' parents were home or whether or not there were any other siblings in the homes.

As I watched this report over and over, the fact that stood out the most was that these men blatantly went to this house to, allegedly, have sex with these children—and there is absolutely nothing that Nevada law can do about it—so far. A Reno judge ruled that in Nevada a predator would have to solicit a real child online—not a cop or other person posing as a child—to actually be charged with a crime. There is still some ambiguity as to whether this law applies to Las Vegas or not. Nevertheless, if this is state law it is ridiculous and assists in endangering children and constitutes irresponsibility on the part of the lawmakers.

Sexual abuse of children seems to be more commonplace than we want to admit. While the sting depicted all



ON THE RECORD

By Dora LaGrande

men, sexual abuse by women of children and teens is a subject most parents and caregivers are not even familiar with.

Female sexual predators go unreported because of a lack of awareness by the public. Overall, 25 percent of all child sexual abuse is committed by a woman. Female perpetrators account for up to 24 percent of abusers of male victims and 6 percent to 17 percent of abusers of female victims.

Nationwide, statistics show that 8 percent of the female abusers are teachers, 23 percent are babysitters. While female perpetrators commit fewer acts of sexual abuse, compared to males, they tend to use more foreign objects as part of their abusive acts.

Because sexual abuse is allegedly more likely to be committed by a man, 86 percent of survivors of sexual abuse were not believed when they said the abuser was a woman.

Regardless of whether or not the abuser or potential abuser is male or female, we must focus our energy on reaching young children and teens before predators do. And we must solicit all of our elected officials to pass legislation that would protect our children from these sickos.

need to provide the resources necessary to protect our children and communities from these sexual predators and their despicable crimes.

Our legislators should make it mandatory for sexual offenders to register with local law enforcement officials. Not just put the law on the books, but also put individuals in place to enforce the law. It's not acceptable, in this case, to use lack of money as an excuse for lack of enforcement. Realize that our children's lives are at stake, protect those little lives with all of the resources we have available.

Even with Megan's Law, our state and many others have used cost as a reason to not fully implement it. The states need to look at the federal government grants that have been specifically designed to assist them in meeting the federal requirements for sex offender registration and notification. The funds can be used to help states pay for training, salaries and equipment associated with sex offender registration and

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