

# LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

## Racial tensions rise in Brooklyn

NEW YORK (AP) — Seventeen years after race riots left the streets of one New York City neighborhood bloodied, tensions are rising again there between Orthodox Jews and Blacks.

First, a Black man was badly beaten. Weeks later, a Jewish teenager said he was attacked by two young Blacks while riding his bicycle, and angry Jewish residents took to the streets with signs saying "Jewish blood is not cheap!" and "Every Jew a .22."

And along the way, the district attorney accused an Orthodox Jewish street patrol of vigilantism and compared the group to street gangs like the Bloods and Crips.

The strife has revived painful memories of the 1991 riots in the Brooklyn neighborhood called Crown Heights, which is home to about 15,000 Orthodox Jews and more than 130,000 Blacks.

As summer approaches, leaders from both sides are braced for trouble.

"One small incident could escalate into something beyond our grasp," warned Richard Green, head of the Crown Heights Youth Collective, a group he said inspires the races "to interact instead of react."

The group was started after the 1991 riots that exploded after a Black child was accidentally struck by a station wagon in the motorcade of a Jewish spiritual leader. The 7-year-old boy, who was pinned under the vehicle, later died of his injuries. In the ensuing unrest, which lasted three days, a rabbinical student was mortally stabbed by a Black mob.

To quell fears of new unrest, Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly visited Crown Heights earlier this month and stepped up police patrols. Officers also are perched atop a tower, keeping 24-hour watch over the world headquarters of the ultra-Orthodox Lubavitch movement.

"It's a very delicate situation in Crown Heights, a bubble of tension," said Geoffrey Davis, a longtime Black resident.

District Attorney Charles Hynes has convened a grand jury to probe the April 14 assault on Andrew Charles, a 20-year-old son of a police detective. He told police that a man on a bicycle sprayed him with mace while another man stepped out of an SUV, struck him with a wooden object and drove off.

Police have released a photograph of a 25-year-old member of the local street patrol group, the Shmira, who is wanted for questioning in what Hynes calls "an unprovoked attack."

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Tensions between Blacks and Jews are once again hot. Community leaders hope to bring the groups together.

## Obama: I will help families

Special to Sentinel-Voice  
Illinois Senator and Democratic presidential

frontrunner Barack Obama told Las Vegans in two tightly-scripted and con-

trolled settings on Tuesday that, as president, he will crack down on predatory

housing lenders and provide assistance for families facing (See Obama, Page 5)



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Housing counselor Linda Abrams-Bowie, left, explains to Illinois Senator and Democratic presidential frontrunner Barack Obama, right, some of the circumstances, such as high foreclosure rates and a tight credit lending market, that Las Vegas homeowners are facing. Obama also answered additional questions during his Nevada visit.

## Groups healing Black-Latino strife

By Olu Alemoru

Special to Sentinel-Voice

SOUTH LOS ANGELES (NNPA) — In the aftermath of a reported racial flare-up on a local high school campus, African-American and Latino activist groups have ramped up efforts to ease tensions between the two communities.

And in a related development, activists have called for a meeting with the owners of the MySpace social networking website after disturbing gang imagery of murdered high school student Jamiel Shaw emerged on the Internet.

On May 10, Locke High School in Watts was put on lockdown after a lunchtime fight escalated into what some saw as a racial brawl. Some reports claimed that more than 600 students became involved, as African-American and Latino students fought one another.

However, Andres Ramirez, an organizer for the Community Coalition's South Central Youth Empowered Thru Action who is

based on the campus, said reports of the incident were overblown. SCYEA is a youth development program that brings African-American and Latino students together to improve their schools and communities.

While taking care not to downplay the seriousness of the incident, Ramirez said it actually began when a Black member of his organization, who is also on the Locke football team, had an on-campus confrontation with a Latino athlete on campus.

"The two sets of friends, some of whom might have been in gangs, got involved," he said. "There might have been about 200 kids — and it wasn't Black and Brown kids just randomly jumping each other."

In an ironic twist, members of SCYEA had one day earlier held a demonstration of public unity in another section of South L.A. As a group, Latino activists denounced Brown-on-Black violence in a rally outside Jefferson High School. The leaders also demanded

greater investment in public resources toward prevention and intervention programs for local youth.

The grassroots organizations that took part work on a variety of issues: juvenile justice, immigration, foster care, gang intervention and housing. They included the Alliance for a Better Community, the Central American Resource Center, Homies Unidos, InnerCity Struggle and Communities for a Better Environment.

"African-American and Latino men are dying at alarming rates," said Elmer Roldan of Community Coalition. "Since the first of the year, there have been 271 homicides in Los Angeles County. Seventy-nine African-Americans and 159 Latinos have fallen victim to violence."

He added: "Almost all of these victims are men and boys between the ages of 15 and 40. We know at least 15 of the deaths were due to [interracial] violence. This is unacceptable. Our brothers are falling victim to the

streets and we need to intervene to prevent more deaths."

While a number of public officials have sought to downplay the racial element of recent homicides, the statistics do indicate an increase in Latino-on-African-American killings, maintained Aurea Montes-Rodriguez, a Community Coalition senior director.

"Rather than ignore the statistics, we must acknowledge that lives are being lost and begin to move toward comprehensive solutions that address the root causes of violence."

Maria Brenes, executive director of InnerCity Struggle, decried the failure of Latino leadership to denounce the increase on Brown-on-Black violence and praised the proactive approach of the coalition.

"The reality is that African-Americans and Latinos live together in these communities every day, and we're the ones that really suffer the devastation of the lack (See Tension, Page 11)