

Mockingbird Times



Recipient 2005 Angels in Adoption Award

Building a world class foster care system while serving our neighborhood youth.

February 2006

Foster Care and Homeless Youth Speak Out Across the Nation

Visit us online at www.mockingbirdsociety.org or call 206-323-KIDS (5437)

Volume VI, Issue 2

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Youth Advocacy Day A Success!

MISTY LOU COOK

On Martin Luther King Day, *Mockingbird Times* Reporters, some of the Mockingbird Society and many other Foster Care Youth Advocates went to Olympia to support House Bill 2002 (HB 2002). The room we were all testifying in was packed with advocates, young people, reporters and concerned citizens! This was my first time testifying before Legislators in Olympia, so I felt a lot of adrenaline and anxiety before going up to speak on behalf of youth in the foster care system, yet I also felt empowered by all of that adrenaline and "excess" energy, and my testimony came naturally. Testifying on Martin Luther King Day was very powerful, and a few of us quoted Dr. Martin Luther King while testifying before the House Committee. The general feeling was that this day was a complete success!

Youth Advocacy Training Day was a tremendous success as well, and took place the day before Youth Advocacy Day to prepare young people, advocates and concerned citizens for "the big day". Courtney and I gave a run-down on the history of HB 2002 and where HB 2002 is right now in regards to legislation, there were some really inspiring speakers and there was a lot of free pizza. We all felt more prepared after the speakers broke down what goes on in the House and Senate, how a Bill becomes a Law and who our Legislators are. Training Day bridged the gaps in our education about what goes on during legislation.

Youth Advocacy Day was nothing like I had expected it to be. I envisioned a huge, stuffy room where people were waiting to testify before official Representatives ... but instead, it was laid back and the Legislators came and spoke with us, one group at a time. There were no microphones, but many Senators and House Representatives came into the meeting rooms we were located in and spoke with us, answered our questions, and gave the overall impression of being genuinely concerned with young people and their futures. I hadn't expected these Representatives to be so, well, human, and it was refreshing, uplifting and hopeful for me to see official Representatives relating to young people on a real basis. Representative Ed Murray then invited five of us to come and hang out in his official office. Murray showed us his pictures of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr. and Cal Anderson, whom he personally knew and worked with for years. I learned that Cal Anderson was the first openly gay Legislator in Washington State and that not all Representatives are mean, old or unfair. I also had a unique opportunity to advocate for HB 2002 and speak directly with Ed Murray about how it could have a positive impact on the lives of hundreds of young people annually.

For more information on HB 2002, its progress in the legislature, and how you can get in touch with your representatives, please refer to the article in last month's *Mockingbird Times*. You may also visit us at www.mockingbirdsociety.org.



Mockingbird Representatives Cassandra Davis, Maleka Taylor, Jacob Harrison, and Anthony Guess pose inside the State Capitol on Advocacy Day



Misty with Representative Ed Murray on Advocacy Day

Remembering Coretta Scott

JAMICA HENDERSON



"My Life with Martin Luther King Jr." and in 1969 funded the multimillion-dollar Martin Luther King Jr. center in Atlanta, GA. Coretta Scott became really sick after suffering a serious heart attack and a stroke this past August. Due to her stroke, she was unable to attend her husband's celebration in Atlanta two weeks ago. Although, Mrs. King did get to attend an awards dinner with her children a couple of days before she passed.

In her last days of life, she seemed to have a happy heart. She apparently attended the awards ceremony in her wheelchair with a big smile on her face while everyone acknowledged her for the impact she has had on our country's history. Coretta Scott was 78 when she passed away on January 31st 2006. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King have made such a big difference in our society. They will always be remembered for their legacy.

Coretta Scott King will always be remembered, not only for her husband's legacy, but for keeping his dream alive after his death. We get to remember Mrs. King for her hard, strong, loving and caring spirit for her culture and her people's struggles. The King children must have always felt special to have parents who made such a difference in not only their lives and future but for the entire world's as well.

After Dr. King passed away Mrs. King stayed strong and committed herself to keeping his "dream" alive. She wrote a book called

Mockingbird's Tune

MALEKA TAYLOR
LEONA BILL
JAMICA HENDERSON

Mockingbird's Tune
When we sing about the world,
our song is strong:
it can be hard, but fun.
Our song is new.
When you hear our song,
it is a journey.
Our song has a rhythm
like a river: light, laid-back,
smooth like a waterfall.
When we sing about the world,
our song helps people heal
because it opens the truth.
Here we are, united.
We want our song to enlighten;
it is inspiring, rare, unique.
We are Mockingbird: hear our song.

Letter from the Editor

JIM
THEOFELIS



2006 has started with a flurry of amazing activity for the Mockingbird Society. On February 3rd ASK-Y (Advocates for System Kids and Youth) had our annual legislative Youth Advocacy Day in Olympia. Over 100 youth, advocates, foster parents as well as community and business representatives attended the day long event. It was incredible as several legislators addressed the group and took questions from youth regarding an assortment of topics and issues. However, the primary focus was on HB 2002 and its companion bill SB 6324 the Foster Youth Achievement Act. Current policy in Washington State is that youth in foster care who have earned a high school diploma/GED and reach age 18 become ineligible for foster care that very day. Many of the horrific outcomes experienced by foster youth including homelessness, incarceration, early parenting and significant poor health have been detailed by quality research of youth aging out of the system. The Foster Youth Achievement Act would allow youth who have earned a high school diploma/GED and managed to overcome major obstacles while in foster care to voluntarily remain

in foster care while attending college or a voc-tech program. Giving young people from foster care the opportunity to continue living with a family they feel connected to while continuing their education is a public policy that is fiscally, socially and spiritually responsible. The Mockingbird Society is proud to have a leadership role and even more proud to stand along side the many organizations and individuals who have participated in this truly important social justice effort.

The Mockingbird Society invites you to our annual fund raiser where we will premier A Place to Sing- a documentary produced by Wild Geese Productions depicting the perspective of youth involved in foster care and Mockingbird Society. We are also fortunate to have Mr. Adam Cornell as our keynote speaker. Adam is a well known prolific speaker and advocate for youth in the foster care system. The Mockingbird Society has made great gains and significant contributions to improving the current and future lives of the children, youth and families involved in foster care and I am hopeful you will help us by attending and contributing to our annual event. For more information contact Darcie Gray at 206-323-5437 or visit www.mockingbirdsociety.org.



Jim Theofelis

jim@mockingbirdsociety.org

Got a Juvenile Record? Let us help you SEAL it!

This is a FREE clinic open to anyone with a juvenile record from King County Juvenile Court who would like to have their record sealed. The clinic is staffed by volunteer lawyers and law school students.

No need to make an appointment, no need to bring anything with you, just yourself and anyone else who wants to seal their record!

Sponsored By:
Washington Defender Association
SYLAW (UW Chapter)
Mockingbird Times
University of Washington
School of Law

2006 DATES:
February 15, 6 pm to 8 pm
March 29, 6 pm to 8 pm
April 19, 6pm to 8 pm
May 17, 6 pm to 8 pm

LOCATION:
SCRAP
1401 East Jefferson
Suite 200
Seattle, WA 98122

One block northeast of King

Got questions?
Call (206) 616-7168

Mockingbird Society: The Story Behind the Name

The 1962 American classic To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee is the inspiration for our name, Mockingbird Society. Atticus, the widowed father of Jem and Scout, joins Miss Maudie in teaching his kids that it's a sin to kill a mockingbird because "...Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for

us." What if we created an organization, a community, indeed a world in which our most vulnerable children and youth were protected and valued with the same commitment that Atticus had for mockingbirds? Join the Mockingbird Society today and help us give young people a safe place to nest and sing.

Thank You's

Aaron Dixon; Leon Hendrix; Laury Bryant; Nancy Levine Photography; Peggy Wilkerson; Mazvita Maraire and Semhar Tadesse of Garfield Community Center; Larry Crim; Jen Gates Daycare; Jim Ott, Seattle-King County Department of Public Health; Mike Ramey; Jeffery Ried and Stephanie Garlich; Wendy Marlowe; Sarah Henderson; Diane Coyne; Diane STE Marie; David and Marilyn Chelimer; Suzanne Smith; South Seattle Worship Group; PONGO; SCAN.

A special thank you to our sponsors for our 5th Annual Fundraiser and Premier of the Mockingbird Society documentary, A Place to Sing, on March 30, 2006 at the Broadway Performance Hall:

WDWillis Wealth Management; Jacobson Jarvis & Co, PLLC

Advocacy Day:

Representative Mary Lou Dickerson; Senator Regala; Representative Ruth Kagi; Representative Mary Helen Roberts; Representative Ed Murray; Representative Sam Hunt; House Speaker Frank Chopp; Friends of Youth; Youthcare; Teenhope; City of Seattle; Laurie Lippold

Mockingbird Society's 5th Annual Auction and Fundraiser: We Believe We Can Fly

ORDER TICKETS Now!

Thursday, March 30, 2006

6-9 pm

Wine, hor d'oeuvres and dessert

Silent and live auction

Premiere of the Mockingbird Society documentary,
A Place to Sing

At the Broadway Performance Hall

1625 Broadway
Seattle, WA 98122

Tickets are \$35 and may be purchased in advance or at the door.

CCAI Congressional Foster Youth Internship Program

If you aged out of foster care at age 18 or were adopted out of foster care after age 14, and have completed four semesters of college by 6/1/06, you are eligible to apply for a six week internship in Washington D.C. in a Congressional Office. For more information, contact Chelsea Buffington at (703) 228-9700 or visit www.ccainstitute.org

All incoming Letters to the Editor should be addressed to Mockingbird Editorial Staff and will be opened by Editorial Staff. All incoming correspondence to reporting staff under 18 years of age will be opened first by Mockingbird Editorial Staff.

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A Mockingbird Inside Your Mailbox

Make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable youth and support the Mockingbird Society!

Donations may be tax deductible and all donors receive the *Mockingbird Times*. Enclosed, please find my check made payable to Mockingbird Society in the amount of: \$ _____

Suggested Donations:

\$1,000+....Protector \$500-999....Caretaker \$250-500....Organizations \$50+....Supporter \$25....Foster Parent

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

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□ Please do not include my name on published donor lists.

Please fill out and mail this form with a check or money order payable to: The Mockingbird Society, 2100 24th Ave South Suite 240, Seattle WA 98144

Interviewing a Legendary Black Panther

**MISTY
Lou Cook**



It's the year 1865, and you were just emancipated by Abraham Lincoln (1) ... you are no longer a slave in the United States. Legally, you are a free man. However, racists rig the voting system in a way that specifically discriminates against you, the Ku Klux Klan is going out of their way to keep you scared, and you aren't granted any civil rights like other Americans are. You are segregated in schools, you are told to drink from different fountains and you want your freedom promised to you way back in 1865. You are a black American, and in the 1960's, you're wondering why, 100 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, you still go to segregated schools and have to sit in the back of the bus so that white people can sit up front. You're wondering why you still can't vote, drink from the same fountains and have basic human and civil rights and it's really starting to piss you off. During this time, great historical leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Bob Marley and Rosa Parks were emerging. The Black Panther Party was a key figure in this time. Black America was aching for a change, by any means necessary, and the Black Panthers were at the front line for a lot of those changes that black communities sought. The Black Panthers were calling for equality, justice and freedom for Black Americans, and were willing to fight for it. Welcome to the Civil Rights Movement.

Aaron Dixon grew up in Seattle, WA, in the Central District, and was taught at an early age "the importance of fighting

for social justice" by his parents, relatives and friends (2). Dixon went to school at the University of Washington, and started the first Black Student Union at the UW in the 1960's. At age 19, he was appointed the head of the Black Panther Party in Seattle, the first Black Panther Chapter outside of Oakland, CA. I first met Aaron Dixon in February of 2006, and was taken back by his stoic, honorable presence, which left me in utter awe. I was in the midst of a living legend! I asked Dixon when and why he first became involved with the

and for a lot of young, black Americans, the killing of Martin Luther King Jr. was the last event that lead to them becoming involved in what became known as the Civil Rights Movement. He was watching the Civil Rights Movement unfold, on the streets, in his home, on the television, and had a very strong upbringing in regards to Civil Rights. He had met and marched with Martin Luther King Jr. when he was 13 years old.

There are a lot of misconceptions about the BPP, the first and main one being



Aaron Dixon (Former Leader of the Seattle Black Panther Party) visits with Misty Lou Cook.

Black Panthers, and what the driving forces were for him to join the Black Panther Party (BPP). He told me that there was a series of events that lead to him joining the BPP, but the main driving force was the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. This was a turbulent time for all Americans,

that the BPP was a violent organization. The media and the US Government "painted a picture" of the Black Panther Party as a violent, criminal and even "terrorist" organization, and that lead to assassinations of BPP Members and a bad reputation, to this day. What most people don't know about

the BPP is that they started what Dixon refers to as "Survivor Programs". Did you know that the Black Panther Party started the first Free Medical Clinics, Food Banks, Clothing Programs, Legal Aid Programs, Preventative Medicine Programs and Free Breakfast Programs in Seattle? Did you know that they started a good portion of the free community programs that are still in existence to this day? It's interesting to note that, in the year of 1974, the US Government started giving money to cities for free clinics, legal aid programs and breakfast programs; programs modeled after what the Black Panther Party had been doing for years. How did they fund these programs? Donations from a supportive and grateful community helped the BPP meet the goals of what's called a "Ten Point Program". Dixon explained these goals to me as goals that "could still be applied today". . The Black Panther Party was concerned about the availability of decent housing for poor Americans, the lack of food for working class folk, education, health care and police brutality. They started community programs and had ties with the Japanese, Native American and poor white communities, whom they advocated and struggled with. Dixon emphasized that the average member age of the Black Panther Party, when they first started, was 19 years old. Dixon also stressed that the BPP "wasn't about Black Nationalism, it was about INTERNATIONALISM". Dixon told me that, **"We showed people that not only did they have a right to exist ... they had a right to exist as a human being with freedom, peace and happiness".**

(1) http://www.africanaonline.com/slavery_timeline.htm

(2) http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/aaron_dixon.htm

Make It Happen - The College Experience 2006

Make It Happen is an all expense paid summer program that offers a series of workshops and fun recreational activities, and gives participants the opportunity to experience life on a college campus.

Applicants must be recognized as a dependent youth in Washington State, federal or tribal out-of-home care; either a sophomore, junior or senior in high school or enrolled in or graduated from a GED program; and interested in going to college and earning a college degree.

For more information or applications, go to www.waedfoundation.org/makeithappen, email makeithappen@waedfoundation.org, or call 1-877-655-4097.

Aging Out: An Honest Film

**ASHLEY
GRANT**



I felt that the film "Aging Out" was a wonderful film that would let the general public know what goes on with kids aging out of foster care into the real world, and also what they have to go through in the process. The film dealt with two foster care children with two different problems that were both aging out.

One of the mentioned people in the film was a young male. The young man I think was a little mentally challenged because of all the changes he went through in his life. It seemed like he really wanted to do right but for some reason he just couldn't. His foster parents were there trying to help but at times (which were the wrong times) they would give up on him. He wanted so bad to be on his own but to the outside world he was not quite ready. There was also another foster child

mentioned in the film, it was a young girl, also a mommy. She was having problems with trying to get out on her own and basically having no help. She was still in the states' care. In the span of the film she moved an estimated six times. She also had the father of the child who was with her every step of the way. The two of them were trying to do the best thing for them as well as their son, but again to the outside world (people of the system) they weren't ready.

I feel that if these two people I watched had a stable family or a real family they wouldn't have had to go through some of the trials and tribulations they went through. I also feel that if the people appointed to help them were there helping them, they wouldn't have gone down the road they did. However, in the end, they both went for the best; the young male went to rehab in which he was basically doing it on his own (killing two stones at once), and the young mother moved out of state along with the father of her child and is now living on her own and going to school.

We are looking for articles, poetry, artwork and photography from our young readers who have experience in the foster care system and/or homelessness. If you want to be published in the Times, contact us at 206-323-5437 or via email at newspaper@mockingbirdsociety.org. For more info and to check us out, go to www.mockingbirdsociety.org.

Resolving Hurt Feelings

**MALEKA
TAYLOR**



Telling someone when they hurt you can be a hard thing to do. It takes a lot of courage and strength. When you love or care about someone, I think it's important to tell them when they hurt your feelings. I also think it's important to forgive.

When someone hurts my feelings, I tend to stuff it in that little pouch in my chest. You all know what happens when you blow too much air into a balloon; it bursts. Well that's what happens when you let hurt feelings continue to hurt; you explode, taking all your anger and emotions out in a manner that is unhealthy for you or the people around you.

Relax, it happens to the best of us. You don't have to feel ashamed or embarrassed to tell someone that they hurt you, it's also part of the forgiving process. Expressing yourself is important for any healthy relationship.

I've experienced and am still experiencing a lot of hurt and it's starting to affect the way I deal with people in my everyday

life. Here are some steps that helped me work towards resolution.

- Come to forgive yourself for the part that you took in the situation.
- Stay calm, you don't want to upset the person your telling; it can result in more hurt feelings. It's not only what you say but how you say it.
- Speak with clarity and sincerity and express how you feel. Say exactly what's in your heart.
- Be open to any response and/or debate. Remember to stay calm.
- Continue your discussion until you have everything off your chest.

He/she may not see your point of view, it's ok, and the important thing is that you're making progress.

Now that you have gotten this far, forgiving is the last step. I believe that forgiveness is ONE key to long term happiness. Although it's not easy forgiving, it's the best way to put it behind you and move on. More than likely, you'll feel better about yourself, be less stressed, and it might even bring you closer to the person who was involved.

"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong."

-Mohandas H. Gandhi



Creative Corner

SHE EATS
WRITING
SITTING ACROSS FROM HER
BEAUTIFUL SMILE
FULL OF SECRETS
OPEN MOUTH LAUGHS
ESTATIC
WE ATE TOGETHER
WROTE OF GAME
“exquisite corpse”

HER SISTER
A POUNDING MEMORY IN MY HEAD
I REACH FOR HER HAND
only seeing
HER SISTER
rings
ON HER FINGERS

I TRACE THE LINES OF
CALOUSES
ON HANDS
THE HANDS SHE DANCES WITH

I CLOSE MY EYES
AND SEE
HAZEL EYES
WATCHING ME
WATCHING HER
SHE CLOSES HER EYES
SEEING ME
WATCHING HER
BEAUTIFUL HAIR
bangs
THAT TRACE SO GENTLY
AGAINST HER FACE
capturing me

I TRACE THEM WITH MY FINGERS

SHE SMILES
AND REACHES FOR MY HAND
remembering
HOW SHE CRIED WHEN SHE
READ
THE INK BLOT POETRY
OF MY LIFE
my pain
HER WRITTEN WORDS
WHISPER
HOPE
TO ME

OLIVE SKIN
SHE SMELLS OF MEMORIES
OF CANADA
SOFT WHITE SNOW
WE DROVE THOUGH
ON A FREEWAY
SO LATE
just me and her

CLIMBING UNDER COVERS
VISIONS OF HER
DANCING
SPINNING ON HER HEAD
SHE MOVES TO THE FLOOR
i am alone
IRRITATED BY MY MOVEMENT
THE SMELL OF HER
lingers
IN THE MORNING
SHE IS THERE

LAUGHING WHEN SHE SMILES
she captures me
GIVING HER A FRIENDSHIP
BRACELET
SHE WEARS FOR SO LONG
TILL IT SHRINKS
EVEN STILL
time does not age her

Can I Keep Her?

LANYA NEELEY

I SEE HER WITH OTHERS
SO EXCITED
TO LAUGH WITH HER
THIS TIME NOT WITH ME
does she even see me

THAT SUMMER SPENT
FUMBLING WITH HIM
NOT TRUSTING HER
LIES FORM WITHIN ME
PULLING THE WRETCHED TRUTH
OUT

ON AN EMAIL
COMPROMISING BETWEEN
LOVES
HE WANTS TO BE MINE
can i keep her
WHEN HE HAS GONE

AND SHE IS ALL THAT'S LEFT
TO TEACH ME PATIENCE
WITH TIME
TO TEACH ME
PATIENCE
WITH GOD

TO TEACH ME
PATIENCE
WITH LOVE

HER SISTER
CONSISTANT IN HER FAITH
in me
PRAYS FOR ME
ON THE BUS
WHENEVER

HER HANDS CAN REACH ME
PRAY FOR ME
I SAY
PRAY FOR ME
I PLEAD
and she does

Definitely Time to “Chill and Spill”

TERESA
ASHER



When I was first handed this book to review, I did not think that it would make me really “Chill and Spill” everything out. At first, I couldn’t put down the book put together by Art with Heart (a non profit that helps youth deal with their problems through self-expression) co-written by Steffanie Lorig and Jeanean Jacobs.

The first thought I had about the book was how is this supposed to help me? I thought the book was silly and didn’t understand how it was supposed to help me with any of my problems, like with school, my boyfriend, emotions and physical problems. After the first exercise, “Your Place” (which is where you draw a place where you feel comfortable and secure) I drew my boyfriend’s place. I realized that my boyfriend’s place was where I could go to feel at “home”. The book helped me understand that. My favorite activity was, and still is, “How I See Myself, How I Want to Be Seen”. The reason this one made me really like the book was that it helped me understand that it’s important to me how people see me and helped me understand how I want to see myself. The book made me think harder about why it mattered to me and helped me put my feelings down on paper.

At first the book was silly, but the book really makes you think about life and becoming mature. It really did help me with my problems and I am amazed by that. I recommend it to everyone that has problems in their life; and everyone has problems in their life, so hey! You can find the book online at www.artwithheart.org.

Black History Month Events

COURTNEY KONIECKO

Seattle Center Festival Sundiata: African-American Celebration February 18-20 2006 <http://festivalsundiata.org/>

Art from Africa: Long Steps Never Broke a Back: Feb. 7-May 19th, Seattle Art Museum, 100 University St. Suggested admission: \$5-\$7; children under 12 free. Contact the museum for “free days” information; 206-654-3100; www.seattleartmuseum.org

The Mandinka Kora: Harp music of Sub-Saharan West Africa, presented by Ken Mathis. Takes place at the Maple Valley Library TH Feb 10 at 7 pm and the Auburn Library on SAT Feb 19 at 2pm.

Black to My Roots: Fridays-Saturdays, 7:30 p.m.; Sundays, 3:30 p.m. through February 24th, Rainier Valley Cultural Center, 3515 S. Alaska St. This theater production is composed of 13 monologues and ensembles pieces that focus on African American women and their relationship with their hair. Tickets: \$9.50-\$15.50, 206-325-6500.

Black History Month Concert: February 17, 5:30p.m., Sand Point Community United Methodist Church, 4710 N.E. 70th St. Information: (206) 523-3040.

ANTHONY
GUESS



On February 4, Leon Hendrix brother of Jimi Hendrix had a memorial for his mother, which neither he or Jimi had attended when she died on February 2, 1958. He said, the time she had spent with them was short and he never experienced the love that a child should feel from its mother. “But I don’t blame her, everyone goes through things when having children.” I asked Leon, What is the most important thing about family? He answered, “the one on one relationship that parents should have with their babies is important. Without that they’re disconnected from each other.” He continued by saying, “Jimi and I loved momma to death, and when I went to go visit my brother at Greenwood Cemetery in Renton WA, I asked were and if anyone knew where my mother was and no one did. I walked over to Jimi’s stone and prayed. Later, a guy walked up and said, “are you trying to find your mom” and I said, “Yes”. The guy then counted a few steps right and a few left and said, “She should be right here”. Leon states now being able to give his mother a headstone, he feels that Jimi is finally at rest and he can finally say he has closure and so does his family. I asked, “In the past ten years what

A Visit With Leon Hendrix

are you most proud of?” his response was, “recovering from alcoholism and drugs with the help of my family. I needed to end the cycle that my parents started me on, and also accepting Jesus in my life.” The house which the Hendrix brothers grew up in is now located in Renton, Washington across from where Jimi and his mother

are buried. The house is now a place of hope and inspiration for unprivileged children seeking music as a creative pathway. Please visit www.leonhendrix.com to see his new CD Keeper of the Flame and to get more information.



Leon Hendrix and Mockingbird Times Reporter Anthony Guess