

Anti-racist court rally draws tight security

By STEPHEN BAGISH
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Police officers stood guard at the Glendale courthouse Monday as 10 members of a political protest group rallied in support of a member being arraigned on charges connected with a November anti-racist demonstration.

Glendale police and Los Angeles County marshals stood watch as the International Committee Against Racism passed out leaflets in support of Jose Hernandez.

Hernandez, an INCAR member, pleaded innocent to a misdemeanor charge of assault for allegedly throwing a can of soda during a Nov. 22 demonstration against self-proclaimed racist J.B. Stoner at the Glendale Holiday Inn, according to Robert Mann, Hernandez's attorney. Mann said Hernandez's pretrial hearing was scheduled for Feb. 4 at 9 a.m.

Sgt. Dean Durand, public information officer of the Glendale Police Department, said police took extra precautions because officials believed INCAR might become violent.

"The INCAR flier got our attention," said Durand. "The department is aware of INCAR members having thrown soda bottles and cans before. We like to be prepared in case the situation deteriorates. The safety of all the people at the courthouse is our primary concern."

Security was extremely tight at the courthouse. Visitors were required to walk through a metal detector at the entrance and two police officers were present to search everyone entering the building.

A police helicopter also buzzed overhead.

In addition to the officers, two police video cameramen, one stationed across the street on the roof of City Hall and one in the courthouse, filmed everyone entering the courthouse and the members of INCAR distributing fliers.

"Glendale is clearly being used as a center to build racism throughout Los Angeles," the fliers claimed. "In Glendale, racists have the freedom to run black workers and youth out of Glendale."

Mann, an attorney based in Santa Monica, said he thought it was outrageous that so much security was in place during the arraignment.

"This is totally insane," said Mann. "I've been representing politically oriented cases for 15 years, and I've never seen anything like this."

Mann said the police had no legitimate basis for putting such tight security in place for such a minor charge, and that it was amazing to him that someone who protested the overt racism of J.B. Stoner could get arrested and made to look like the "bad guy."

"All this attention could hurt my client's case because it makes him look like public enemy No. 1," Mann said. "My client is entitled to some explanation."

Mann also questioned the city's motives for the extreme security and said the tax-paying citizens of Glendale were footing the cost of the operation.

"Why does everyone have to be searched and photographed based on the content of one leaflet?" Mann said. "It's absolutely crazy."

Mann said he asked the presiding judge, Cheryl Krott, to investigate and determine why such heavy security measures were taken. According to Mann, Krott refused.

"She said it was police business and she wasn't going to get involved," Mann said.

Susan Scheer, a spokeswoman for INCAR, said the security exhibited Monday reminded her of South Africa.

"I think the city should be more concerned with the threat posed by racists rather than those who take an active part in protesting racism," said Scheer.

"Stoner is an ex-convict who bombed a church in Birmingham, Ala. in 1958, killing four black children."

Glendale - Ethnic/Racial