

Parking Lot Fight Turns Violent

by Mickey Buckle

It was bound to happen; only nobody expected the parking lot outside the oft-troubled Club Medusa to turn into something akin to a Quentin Tarantino movie set. What started out as your usual suburban twentysomethings flooding into Belltown to partake in an evening of debauchery, ended in a crime scene more dramatic than the usual Saturday night car prowl. Around 3 a.m. on August 21 an argument apparently broke out between two parties trying to simultaneously exit the parking lot in the 2200 block of Western Avenue (very close to the *Messenger* world headquarters). Faster than you can say, "action," according to Seattle police and local press reports, a man with no legs in a Chevy Impala specially designed for handicapped drivers, shot two passengers in the opposing car. This, we assume, allowed said suspect to exit the parking lot first.

Police later spotted and pursued the suspect in a high-speed chase down I-5. He was apprehended. Police also recovered a gun that was reportedly thrown from the shooter's car. The two victims were taken to Harborview Medical Center where no further information on their condition was made public.

Whoa, hold on a minute there. A reported gun-wielding "amputee with no legs" shoots two men so he can get out of a parking lot quickly, then leads police on a high-speed chase, and it only merits a few paragraphs in the local section of *The Seattle Times*? At least King 5 television sent reporter Linda Brill to report live from the scene of the crime. The *Seattle P-I*, however, must have given its coverage team the wrong map because they didn't even bother to show up and file a story.

But wait there's more. In a statement to the press, Seattle's finest summed up the excitement of the event. "An individual in one of the vehicles armed with some type of firearm took it out and fired, hitting two victims," said Captain Tag Gleason of the Seattle Police Department. My goodness, this Tag Gleason character sounds all worked up about this horrifying incident. Sounds like he just might write up a report on this "individual."

After the initial reports, both King 5 television and *The Seattle Times* has remained silent about the story. When asked by *Messenger* staff about further details from the incident, *Times* reporter Jessica Blanchard said she could not confirm that the suspect was a double-amputee with no legs (as reported by King 5) or that the shooting occurred next

door to Club Medusa. Apparently *The Seattle Times* staff are not big television viewers, because Linda Brill had no problem finding the club and standing in the actual parking lot. We would like to personally invite any *Times* reporters to get out from behind their desks and visit our lovely neighborhood for a guided tour.

Of course, this is not the first time Club Medusa, fabled to have the most exclusive V.I.P. lounge in Seattle, has been in the news in connection with public disturbances. Some of you Huskies fans may recall that UW football player Joe Toledo was sentenced to two years probation after pleading guilty to charges of obstructing a public servant stemming from an incident outside Club Medusa in January 2004.

According to police, two officers responded to a disturbance during the early morning hours of January 11 and found three security guards in a shoving match with Toledo, former UW and then Washington Redskins player Kevin Ware, and Christopher Coralles. Police said the men were intoxicated and had been thrown out of the bar for starting a fight with some of the patrons. After the three refused to leave the scene, police used pepper spray to subdue the trio before arresting them. As part of his punishment, Toledo was ordered to write a letter of apology to the police officers and Club Medusa security guards. Wow, talk about stiff sentencing.

In all of this made-for-Hollywood excitement, the focus seems to have shifted away from Club Medusa, where apparently they can't determine the difference between what their promoter's describe as "Urban Legend or Reality." Club owners – the ominous-sounding Belltown Enterprises, LLC – have kept a low profile in the neighborhood.

From what I've heard, there are almost as many bodyguards hanging out in the joint as people. To me this sets a bad tone in an already aggressive atmosphere.

It's rumored the club is frequented by many of Seattle's beloved Mariner players, and that celebrities such as Dave Mathews and Vin Diesel have been spotted in the exclusive V.I.P. lounge. Maybe that's why local media seem to look the other way when "individuals" fire shots at other people.

Club Medusa may be fun for suburban kids seeking a getaway, but it makes you wonder what kind of "urban reality" is in store for the residents of Belltown. ♦

