

Man sues police after G20 protest

By Jennifer C. Yates
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PITTSBURGH — A man has accused police of being overly aggressive and beating him with a baton during last year's Group of 20 economic summit in the first of at least two federal lawsuits related to the event to be filed against authorities.

Frank Beal, 57, of Pittsburgh, said in the suit filed Monday that he was acting as an impartial observer to monitor the protesters and police for any misconduct on Sept. 24 at an intersection in the city's Oakland neighborhood. Beal said he was obeying an officer's order to move to a different corner when officers grabbed him from behind, sprayed pepper spray in his face and hit him in the knee and shin with a baton.

"He's just standing there, watching," Sam Hens-Greco, Beal's attorney, said Tuesday. Beal had to undergo surgery for a fractured kneecap.

The American Civil Liberties Union said it represents several people who it believes were also mistreated by heavy-handed police during the two-day sum-

mit. The ACLU plans to file a lawsuit next month.

"It certainly appeared to be an overreaction by the police. They ended up hurting or arresting hundreds of innocent people who were engaged in no criminal activity," said Witold "Vic" Walczak, the ACLU's legal director in Pennsylvania. "Many were students, not even involved in the protest."

In all, police made nearly 200 arrests during the summit, mostly when protesters and marchers clashed with police in Lawrenceville and near the University of Pittsburgh campus in Oakland.

Beal was charged with resisting arrest and failure to disperse. Those charges were dropped Jan. 20.

"At no time did the plaintiff struggle with the police or attempt to flee," the lawsuit said. "Rather, at the time of his assault by the defendants, plaintiff was in the process of peacefully complying with a police directive."

Beal's suit names the city of Pittsburgh, Harrisburg police officer Edward Grynkwiz III and four unknown officers.



Manuel Balce Ceneta/Associate Press

Former Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod, left, and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

Sherrod rejects new job offer

By Mary Clare Jalonick
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON — Shirley Sherrod, ousted from the Agriculture Department during a racial firestorm that embarrassed the Obama administration, rejected an offer to return to the USDA on Tuesday. But at a cordial news conference with the man who asked her to leave - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack - she said she may do consulting work for him on racial issues.

She was asked to leave her job as Georgia's director of rural development in July after comments she made in March were misconstrued as racist. She has since received numerous apologies from the administration, including from Obama himself, and Vilsack asked her to return. But she said at the news conference with a clearly disappointed Vilsack that she did not think she could say yes to a job "at this point, with all that has happened."

Vilsack said she may work with the department in a consulting capacity in the future to help improve outreach to minorities.

"I look forward to some type of relationship with the department in the future," said Sherrod, who is black. "We do need to work on the issues of discrimination and race in this country."

Vilsack had asked her to become the deputy director of the Office of Advocacy and Outreach, a new position designed to bolster the department's shaky record on civil rights. He had also given her a chance to return to her former job. Both of them said Tuesday Sherrod may return to the department as a consultant once an ongoing review of the depart-

"I look forward to some type of relationship with the department in the future. We do need to work on issues of ... race in this country."

Shirley Sherrod
former Agriculture Department official

ment's efforts on race issues is completed.

"I think I can be helpful to him and the department if I just take a little break and look at how I can be more helpful in the future," Sherrod said.

The two appeared friendly as Vilsack expressed his regret that Sherrod wouldn't return to USDA. He put his arm around her at the news conference and said he leaned on her hard to return.

"I did my best, I think it's fair to say," he said. "There's no one better suited in the country to help us than Shirley."

He said a consulting job may work better for Sherrod, who was concerned about assuming administrative duties like budgeting. She said she was reluctant to be responsible for the weighty duties of the position she was offered.

Sherrod was forced to resign after conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart posted an edited version of a March speech in which said she was initially reluctant to help a white farmer save his farm more than two decades ago, long before she worked for USDA. Vilsack and others, including the NAACP, condemned the remarks before grasping the full context of her speech, which was meant as a lesson in racial healing.

The incident proved embarrassing for the Obama administration, and President Barack Obama called her personally to

express his regret. The NAACP also apologized for its reaction.

Sherrod, who said she has gotten thousands of pieces of mail supporting her, repeated Tuesday that she plans to sue Breitbart. But she declined further questions on the subject.

As he had in the past, Vilsack said he took complete responsibility for Sherrod's ouster. Though the department had conversations with the White House at the time and Sherrod said she was told it was the White House who wanted her gone, Vilsack has said the decision was his.

"I know that I disappointed the president, I disappointed this administration, I disappointed the country, I disappointed Shirley," he said.

"I have to live with that ... Maybe, just maybe, this is an opportunity for the country to have the kind of conversation Shirley thinks we ought to have."

Vilsack said he talked to Sherrod for an hour and a half Tuesday morning.

The two discussed a settlement for black farmers who have been victims of racism pending in the Senate and other civil rights issues facing the department.

The USDA has a long history of discrimination of black farmers who sought out loans and other aid.

The government this year settled a second round of damages stemming from a class-action lawsuit originally settled in 1999.

Stimulus costs to exceed estimates

By Julie Hirschfield Davis
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON — Barack Obama's massive stimulus measure has created or saved as many as 3.3 million jobs and continues to boost economic growth in the second half of 2010, but it's come at a higher pricetag than originally billed.

Congressional analysts released new figures Tuesday estimating that the law enacted in January of 2009 - then projected to cost \$787 billion over a decade - would cost \$814 billion. That's still lower than the Congressional Budget Office estimated in January, when it said the measure would cost \$862 billion.

The report comes 10 weeks before midterm congressional elections in which Republicans are hammering Democrats and Obama on the economy, charging they've pushed runaway spending without creating jobs.

The analysis credits the stimulus measure with increasing the number of people employed somewhere between 1.4 million and 3.3 million jobs between April and June.

It's also boosted the gross domestic product by as much as 4.5 percent, according to the analysis.

The figures are slightly less rosy than the picture

Obama's economic advisers painted last month, when they said the stimulus law had "raised employment by 2.5-to-3.6 million relative to what it otherwise would have been" during that period.

In May, the nonpartisan office estimated the law had created or saved between 1.2 million and 2.8 million jobs during the first three months of the year.

The measure has lowered unemployment as much as 1.8 percent in the second quarter of the year, according to the report.

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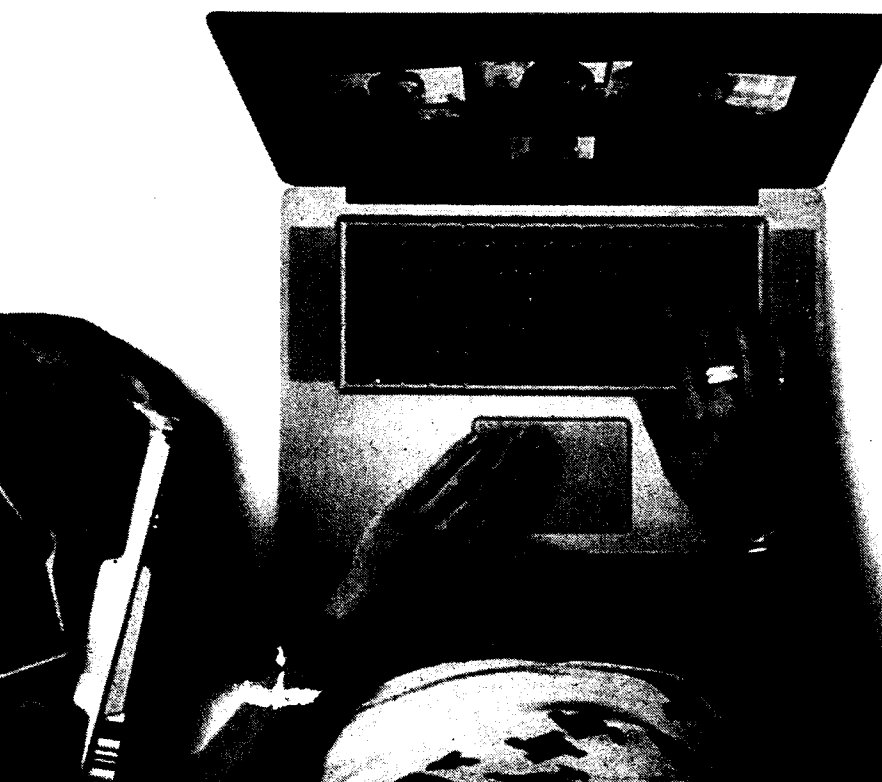
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