

Husker charged with shooting

By Catherine Blalock
Staff Reporter

A University of Nebraska-Lincoln football player has been charged with attempted second-degree murder and use of a weapon to commit a crime.

Riley Washington, a 22-year-old, junior spilt-end offensive letterman, has been charged in an early morning shooting on July 23. Washington's preliminary hearing has been set for August 31.

Lincoln police responded to a call made from the Kwik Shop located at 27th and W streets, indicating that shots had been fired in the lot, Sgt. Ann Heermann said.

Mary Caldwell, who was on duty at the Kwik Shop when the shooting occurred, declined comment. Kwik Shop's headquarters in Hutchison, Kansas, also declined comment.

After Jermaine Cole and Alec Hogan arrived at the convenience store and exited their vehicle, they were met by an individual.

A verbal argument began, and one individual was pushed up against a brick wall. The suspect entered from the south and shots began being fired, Heermann said.

Hogan proceeded to leave the area, and Cole tried to leave and was hit by gunfire. Three shots reportedly were

fired at Cole, who was hit underneath the right arm, Heermann said.

Cole proceeded to a nearby residence located in the block of north 26th street, where a 911 call for medical help was made, she said.

He was released from Lincoln General Hospital on August 3, a spokeswoman for the hospital said.

Cole told a local newspaper that this was a confrontation that has occurred between many NU football players and other Lincoln male residents over the past several years.

Public Defender Scott Helvie told a local newspaper that Washington did not shoot anyone. He also said that his office had received information that NU football players have been harassed by a group of young black men from out of the state and Cole is a member of that group.

This is a gang-related incident and the LPD does have information that some of the people involved have Lincoln gang ties, Heermann said.

Former NU wingback Abdul Muhammad was at the scene but charges have not been filed against him at this time, Sgt. Heermann said.

Muhammad was unavailable for comment.

University athletic officials are not commenting on the situation.

Joan Leitzel, UNL interim chan-

cellor, in a statement released to press, said, "We are concerned any time students are involved in incidents with weapons, particularly when a shooting has occurred. We are awaiting developments in the incident that occurred involving Riley Washington, but at this time his status as a student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln remains unchanged."

Leitzel said just because Washington is a UNL football player he will not be treated any differently.

"It will be no different than if any student was charged," she said.

During the 1994 football season Washington played in all of the games. He never had a reception but he did have one carry for a five-yard gain against Wyoming. In the 1995 Orange Bowl, Washington had a nine-yard rush on a reverse in the second quarter on a first down.

Washington was also on the track team. He is a 1993 and 1995 Big Eight indoor, 55-meter dash champion, a 1994 indoor track All-American, and a 1993 Outdoor Track All-American in the 100-meter dash.

Chris Anderson, director of sports information at UNL, said Washington's athletic status remains unchanged at this time and does not know when a decision will be made.

Retailers investigated in forced labor case

EL MONTE, Calif. (AP) - Two big retail chains, Montgomery Ward and Mervyn's, are being investigated in connection with a sweatshop where dozens of Thai nationals were discovered working in virtual slavery.

A subpoena has been issued to Mervyn's department store, state officials said Tuesday, and they are preparing to serve others to Montgomery Ward.

"Two retail stores, from initial evidence, appear to have been dealing directly with the contractors," state Labor Commissioner Victoria Bradshaw said.

If investigators find direct links between the retailers and the sweatshop, the companies could be held liable for the workers' back wages, estimated at more than \$3.5 million, she said.

The companies' addresses were discovered on shipping labels on boxes of garments found during last week's raid of three apartments converted into a mill that authorities said did business as SK Fashions.

State and federal agents raided the sweatshop Aug. 2 and found 64

Thai nationals, eight of whom were arrested. Some of the workers said they were held in indentured servitude for years to work off immigration costs as garment makers. They said they worked 17-hour days at \$1 per hour.

Two other people were arrested later. The 10 suspects face charges ranging from violations of state minimum-wage regulations to federal smuggling laws.

A Mervyn's spokeswoman said Tuesday that the company could find no record of having received clothing from the sweatshop.

"At this point, we just don't know if we're involved at all," said Sandra Salyer. "Hopefully we're not involved, because judging by what I've read in the newspaper, it was a pretty frightening place."

Montgomery Ward spokeswoman Sarina Butler said her company has found no records of dealings with SK.

"It's possible they would be a subcontractor for a company we do business with, but there's no way to know that," she said.

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