

# Point of View

## Editorial

### Jordan Shooting Senseless Crime

It's a sad commentary to be in the midst of a society infiltrated with "sick, mixed up people," who commit senseless crimes against an honest, sincere, dedicated, hard-working populace, black and white.

It is tragic to see defenseless citizens become victims of those senseless crimes. What really hurts is that we are then deprived of those individuals or vital possessions that mean so much to all of us.

What is a society without men, women and children who give fully of themselves to make this a better place to exist? Their blood, sweat, energies, sacrifices go for naught when the criminal element moves to deprive one of his or her life, abilities, leadership, achievements and the God-given rights to equal justice and equal liberties.

The senseless shooting of Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., president of the National Urban League, in Fort Wayne, Ind., the other day, is a prime example of what this society needs to deal with promptly. Classic examples of our tragic past include the shooting deaths of President John F. Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther

King, Jr., Senator Robert F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, the two young girls killed at a Birmingham church during those early days of struggle, plus many others who gave their lives for "our freedom."

Jordan, 44, a civil rights crusader for two decades, was shot about 2 a.m., May 29, as he stepped out of a car in the parking lot of the Marriott Inn. He was accompanied by divorcee Martha Coleman, 36, a white board of directors member of the local chapter of the Urban League. At this writing, Jordan's condition was listed as serious but stable at the Parkview Memorial Hospital in Fort Wayne.

The nation was stunned at this senseless shooting. President Jimmy Carter filed a statement of concern and called for calm among everyone. Locally, the black community was shocked, saddened and appalled.

Las Vegas chapter NAACP president James McMillan said he was also shocked but withheld any further statement until more is known about the shooting. "I just hope it wasn't racially motivated," he said.

State Senator Joe Neal was saddened over the incident. Leonard Mason, a (See Editorial, page 21)



WASHINGTON — As I write this, law enforcement officials have no suspects, but a few interesting clues, in the shooting of Vernon Jordan Jr., president of the National Urban League.

But investigators have backed away from the early implication that Jordan had been shot in a sudden moment of jealous rage by a former husband or lover of the white woman who drove the noted civil rights leader back to his Ft. Wayne, Ind., motel. By weekend, evidence was accumulating that the shooting of Jordan was a manifestation of a resurgence of racism, especially violent Ku Klux Klan activity, in this country.

FBI agents found evidence that three or more persons were lying in wait when Jordan was driven back to the Marriott Inn, where he was staying, by Martha Coleman, a white woman who is a member of the Ft. Wayne Urban League's board of directors.

The FBI also learned that, as has been the case in much of the nation, there has been heightened Ku Klux Klan

activity in Indiana in general, and in and around that motel in particular.

The Klan is notoriously hostile toward white women who ride in cars with black men, especially civil rights leaders, no matter how innocent the association may be. Three Klansmen shot Mrs. Viola Gregg Liuzzo to death on a highway near Selma, Ala., in March 1965 when violent elements in the Klan were running amok.

The FBI must pursue the possibility that racists saw Jordan enter Coleman's car after he finished his speech to the Urban League dinner, and they organized a "hit" squad to ambush Jordan upon his return.

That theory raises the question of why the would-be assassins did not also attempt kill Coleman.

Another possibility, equally disturbing, is that someone conspired to kill Jordan long before he reached Ft. Wayne, and that the fact that he was riding with a white female volunteer worker for the Urban League is irrelevant. Jordan has made some very con-

## CARL ROWAN

### How Does The Klan Know When To Surface?

troversial statements about the Middle East and black Americans talking to PLO leaders; he has been a powerful critic of U.S. government policies that cheat the poor and leave millions of blacks and other minorities jobless and hopeless.

But are we really so sick a society that a black man risks his life by riding in a car with a white woman? Are we now assassinating people because they articulate eloquently the grievances of America's hungry and harassed as Jordan has done?

The questions are horrible. But so are the implications of this attempt to take Vernon Jordan's life.

Only a month ago, I wrote a column deploring "this epidemic of easy violence in America."

Who or what in our society sends out signals telling the haters, the raffraff, the practitioners of crude violence, that they come out from under the rocks again?

After that ugly period when Mrs. Liuzzo was murdered, and when black children were bombed to death in a Birmingham church, there was a time when the Klan

dared scarcely to rear its head. But recently, at a college in western Maryland, black co-eds spoke to me at length of their fear of physical harm by resurgent Klan units in the area.

Do the haters see something about the White House, some act of commission or omission, that tell them they can rise again? Or is it something they see in the attitudes of law enforcement officials, nationally or locally, that tells them that vigilantes can ride again — with impunity?

Perhaps it is the national mood as a whole. People frustrated by an Iranian ayatollah, or Soviet agressions. People irriated by their economic plight. Everyone scapegoating, blaming some other race or class. A general political drift to the right.

That seems fertile enough grounds for the seeds of violent hatred to produce some very poisonous harvests.

## Letters

To The Editor:  
Mrs. Betty Brown, Chief

First, I want to congratulate you for a fine informative newspaper.

I have traveled and lived in many cities, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco and Philly, but have yet to see a more impressive newspaper as the LAS VEGAS SENTINEL. As a matter of fact, you could easily compare yourself with the CHICAGO DEFENDER, LOS ANGELES SENTINEL, or the PHILADELPHIA ENQUIRER.

Keep on, MRS. BROWN!

Yours in concern:  
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# The State Of Black America

BY VERNON E. JORDAN, JR.

The National Urban League recently released its annual report, The State of Black America. As in past years, it presented a grim picture of black disadvantage.

### Vernon Jordan is president of the National Urban League.

The past decade saw a widening of the yawning gap between blacks and whites. Black family income fell from over 60 percent of white family in-

example, masks the fact that disproportionate numbers are in community colleges or other institutions that do not grant BA or BS degrees.

The growth of the numbers of blacks in professional and managerial jobs leads some to assume that these higher status positions mean middle class incomes. But the report finds that three-fourths of black professionals and managers earn LESS than the national median family income.



JORDAN

The same holds for the much-vaunted shift to white collar jobs. The bulk of the increase took place in lower-rung clerical

jobs, and half of black sales and clerical workers earn poverty-level incomes or less.

The report finds the outlook for the 80's bleak. Blacks never recovered from the recessions of the 70's, and another recession this year will further widen the black-white gap.

Growing competition for jobs is another threat. Between 1974 and 1977 blacks obtained only five percent of the new jobs in private industry. Black men suffered a net loss of (See Vernon, page 21)