

## Living in Fear: CRIME IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

by Congressman  
Augustus F. Hawkins

A recent headline in a local community paper, sent a troubling shock through my body: "Tot Killed By Random Bullet." Unfortunately this headline is all too common. It is tragic, senseless, pervasive, and like a plague running rampant through the Black community. Somewhere, somehow, this must end. Crime is increasing in the inner city, turning parts of the Black community into "mean streets", putting the majority of people who are law abiding persons at risk. Children are traumatized by incessant violent criminal acts, further impairing their progress in schools and society in general.

Dr. Lee P. Brown, in an article entitled "Crime in the Black Community", perhaps best sums up the urban crime scene:

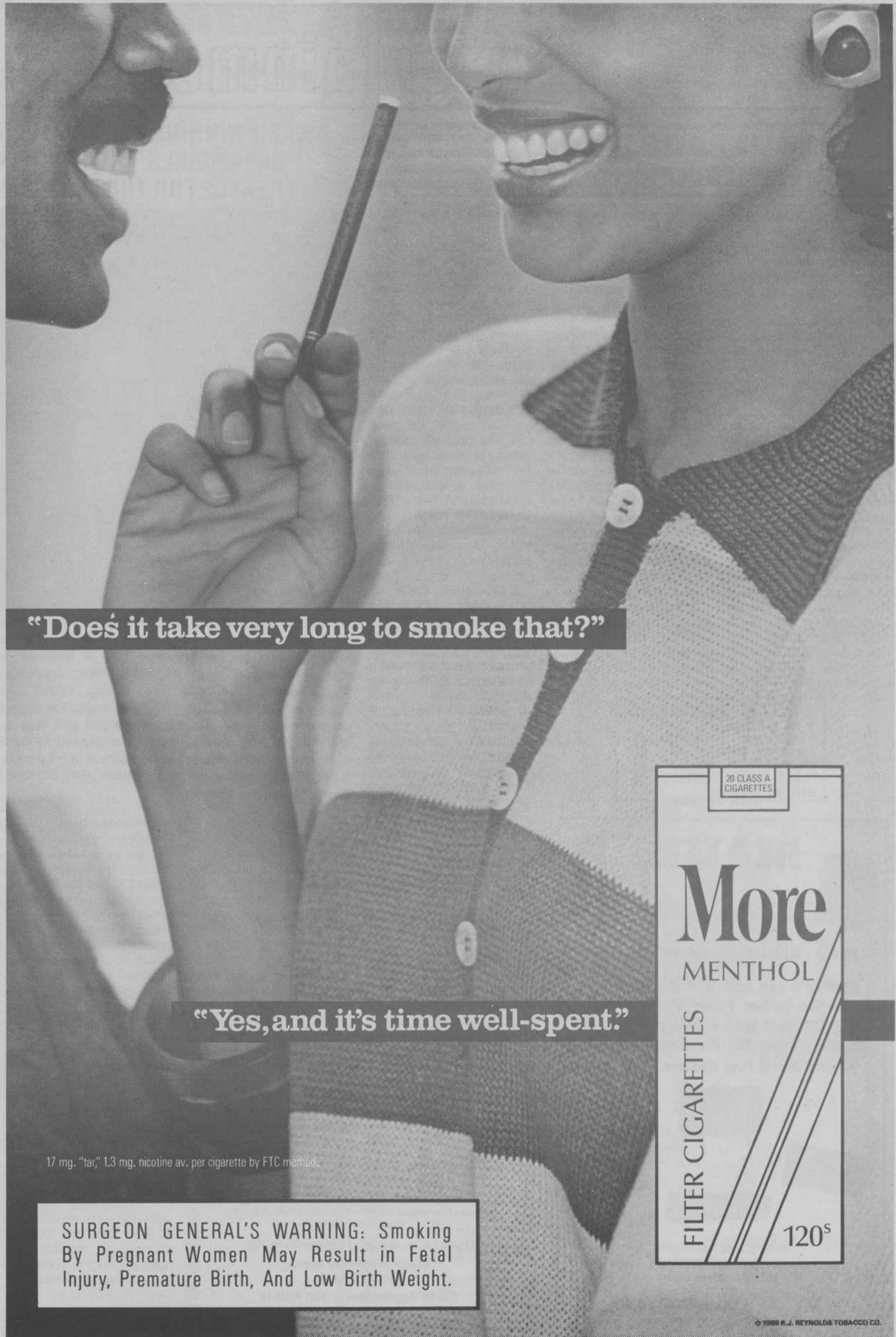
"...in reality, all too often, the residents and businesses in America's black communities have been the prey of a handful of criminals whose actions debilitate neighborhoods. As a result, outsiders and residents alike view many black neighborhoods as crime turfs and many of the people who live there as criminals. Such is not the case. The vast majority of persons who live in predominantly black neighborhoods are law abiding citizens who take pride in their neighborhoods. They are citizens who want peace and security in the community."

But we must first erase the wrong-headed notion that most of the people who live in crime ridden neighborhoods are criminals because it gives the wrong impression that criminals are victimizing other criminals. Even if this is so, these communities should not be ignored by a cold shoulder of indifference and racial polarization.

The fact is, although improved law enforcement resources are needed, the problem is much more deep rooted than that. As Dr. Brown points out:

"...any sincere effort to deal with the crime problem must address the problems of unemployment, underemployment, substandard housing, in-

See HAWKINS, Page 16



**"Does it take very long to smoke that?"**

**"Yes, and it's time well-spent."**

17 mg. "tar," 1.3 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

**SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking By Pregnant Women May Result in Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.**

