

# More youth are dying by murder and suicide

By Tara Meyer

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The much publicized shooting deaths of rappers Tupac Shakur and Christopher Wallace a.k.a. the Notorious B.I.G. or Biggie Smalls, seen as reminders that gunfire and violence continue to rob communities of their young people.

The deaths confirmation of a report recently released by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention that suggests that suicide, murder and gunfire are wiping out American children at higher rates than their counterparts in the rest of the industrialized world.

The report highlighted that 2.57 out of every 100,000 Americans under age 15 are killed, compared with an overall rate of .51 in the 26 countries surveyed.

The U.S. rate is five times higher than in the other countries combined and the rate of firearm injury related deaths is 12 times higher. The U.S. homicide rates for the same group has tripled between 1950 and 1993.

The 26 countries reported 2,872 deaths among children 15 and or younger over a one year period. Of the homicides, 1,464, 78 percent, occurred among U.S. children.

Firearm deaths accounted for 1.66 out of every 100,000 children in the United States, compared with .14 in the other nations. That is, of the 1107 children killed by firearms, 957, 86 percent, occurred in the United States.

The nation's child suicide rate is twice as high as the other countries combined: .55 out of every 100,000 children, compared with .27. It has

quadrupled between 1950 and 1993.

Suicide accounted for the deaths of 599 children including 431 boys, 72 percent and 168 girls, 28 percent. Of the suicides, 321, 54 percent, occurred in the United States.

"Our children are getting killed or killing themselves at higher rates than any other country," Dr. Etienne Krug said. She is a CDC medical epidemiologist. "No child should die a violent death in the most industrialized country in the world."

"We are a more violent society," Holly Richardson,

spokeswoman for the Washington-based Handgun Control Inc. said. "When you add firearms, which are by far the most lethal means of injury, what you're going to see is an increase in death rates."

The CDC study reflects figures for 1990 to 1995. Each country surveyed had more than one million people, similar economics and a system that recorded death rates.

No children died from guns in Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Singapore, Japan and Kuwait, the CDC said.

"Since other countries manage to prevent these deaths,

we have to do the same," Krug said. The CDC now plans to study the countries more closely to find similarities between them and the United States.

"Do they have a high divorce rate, a large gap between the rich and poor? How do they store their guns? What laws do they have?" Krug asked.

The National Rifle Association is skeptical of the CDC's findings.

"The CDC has a difficulty in that it is gun-fixated," NRA spokesman Tom Wilde said. "No one would argue that this

country has a violence problem, but these transnational comparisons are weak at best because there are so many cultural factors involved."

Last July, the House of Representatives stripped \$2.6 million from the CDC budget, saying its research into deaths and injuries caused by firearms was being misused to subtly push a gun control agenda.

The CDC has denied those claims.

"Firearms are one of the causes of preventable deaths in the United States, but we study all of them," Krug said.

## Suspect arrested in Cosby killing

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Mikhail Markhasev was arrested last week and charged with murder of Ennis Cosby. His arrest came after a someone called the National Inquirer hoping to claim a \$100,000 reward.

Markhasev did not enter a plea when he was brought before Judge Michael Kellogg who set March 28 for another hearing and ordered the 18-year-old held without bail.

According to Los Angeles Police Chief, Willie Williams, robbery was the motive for the murder. He also said that

nothing appeared to have been taken during the robbery attempt and that Markhasev drove to and from the crime scene. Cosby was shot to death along a roadside as he changed the tire of his \$130,000 Mercedes.

A knitted woolen cap believed to belong to Cosby and a gun were seized when Markhasev, who has some criminal history, was arrested last Friday night.

Ballistic tests confirmed the gun was used in the killing.

A woman that Cosby was going to visit the night he was shot to death, went to the scene of the murder after Cosby had the flat tire where she met the killer face to face. She is the primary witness and she had given police a complete

description of the killer. Her description of the killer matches Markhasev.

The state of California and two tabloids offered combined rewards of \$400,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the killer. The state withdrew its \$50,000 offer at the request of the Cosby family. Los Angeles County also dropped a reward.

Enquirer editor, Steve Coz, said the tipster called within days of the murder and gave a reporter a pager number.

The tipster also told the reporter that there was a Russian crime syndicate connection, but Williams stated that Markhasev was not part of a gang.

Markhasev came to the United States as a refugee from

the Soviet Union in 1989. He is not a U.S. citizen. According to classmates, he wanted to fit so badly, he faked a Mexican accent and grew a mustache.

A clean-cut straight A student who was a wide receiver on the freshman football team, Markhasev changed his image and made friends with tough kids.

When he was first arrested, allegations that he was part of a Russian gang surfaced, but his friends say those allegations were not true and that he wanted to be a part of a Chicano gang.

Since Cosby's death took place during a robbery which is considered a special circumstance by California law, Markhasev could be facing the death penalty.

## Banquet to honor baseball greats

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The Jackie Robinson 50th Anniversary Awards Banquet will take place on April 18 from 7 - 11 p.m. at the Renaissance Harborplace Hotel, 201 E. Pratt Street in Baltimore, Md.

The year's event will honor several individuals who specifically made significant contributions to Jackie Robinson's baseball career and helped transform major league baseball in general.

They include: Sam Lacy, who will receive the Jackie Robinson Sports Journalism Award for his advocacy for the desegregation of the Major Leagues; Don Newcombe,

who won both the 1949 Rockie of the Year Award and the first Cy Young Award and Most Valuable Player Award in 1956 (although he's not in baseball's hall of fame) will receive the Jackie Robinson Hall of Fame Award; Rex Barney will receive the Spirit of the Game Award because he was one of the few white teammates who publicly befriended Robinson; Lenny Moore, a former football player with the Baltimore Colts and a friend of Jackie's will receive the Humanitarian Award because his work with young people exemplifies Robinson's commitment and legacy of giving back to the community.

Joe Black, an executive with Greyhound, will receive the Corporate Award. He played with the Elite Giants, a Negro League Team and was the first African-American pitcher to win a world series game. Twenty Negro Leagues Baseball Players will also receive special citations for laying the foundation for Robison's launch into the major leagues. They include Eugene Benson who was Robinson's roommate just before he was signed by the Dodgers and Mamie "Peanut" Johnson, one of only three women who played in the Negro Leagues.

The evening's keynote speaker will be Robinson's daughter, Sharon. For more information please call (410) 783-5469.

## NNPA

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Chair Maxine Waters and other members of the body, as well as newly-sworn-in Department of Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater. They will also attend a reception co-hosted by the Coalition for Fairness in African Policy to mark the 170th anniversary of the Black Press.

The Black Press of America started in 1827 with the establishment of the Freedom's Journal by John Russwurm and Sam Cornish. Today, the NNPA represents more than 200 newspapers nationwide, with a combined membership of more than 11 million readers.

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