

OUR VIEW

The murder of an innocent

The Memorial Day weekend killing of 7-year-old Sherrice Iverson at the Primm Valley casino should spark more than a week's worth of outrage and disgust in our community. This horrible tragedy, and the public and media reaction to it, reverberates a strong undercurrent of race.

A blond teenager — a voyeur of child pornography and a white supremacy sympathizer — preys on Sherrice and follows her into the hotel arcade restroom. In the handicapped stall, he rips the second-grader's clothes off, puts his fingers in her private parts while muffling her cries for help.

While holding her down, he masturbates over her naked body. Then in his self-proclaimed act of mercy, he snaps her neck — not once but twice — as if the little girl was some wild jungle animal attacking him.

And then he props her limp body up on the toilet stool with her feet dangling, so as not to alert any other women passersby. After telling some friends about his Vegas vacation, police arrest him. And during interrogation he tells the detectives he always wondered what it would be like to kill someone.

It's an abomination that the suspect should play out his curiosity on any little girl, much less a black one. But it seems our lives somehow have and continue to be less valuable to white people.

Just like Emmitt Till who whistled at that white woman down south, the children of Soweto peacefully protesting in South Africa or even the local police killing of casino floorman Charles Bush, the facts consistently show that others don't even think twice of lynching a black person, gunning a few hundred of us down or even choking us to death in our home.

Imagine, in any of these examples, if the races had been reversed. What do you think would have been the reaction if a black Compton gangmember snatched a white 7-year-old from Orange County into a casino bathroom, raped her with his fingers, relieved himself on her body and then propped her up on the toilet. Imagine the outrage; somebody call the National Guard to protect the jailhouse, lest the suspect not even survive to the start of a trial.

And enough already of the critics reaming on Sherrice's father, Leroy, for letting her roam around the arcade "at such wee hours of the morning" unattended. How come nobody is saying anything to the parents of the other white kids running around the arcade as seen in the now widely-seen surveillance tape? When the suspect is returned to Las Vegas, all black organizations should plan a massive march on the jail to show this community that we respect and value the lives of all persons, particularly our own black children. If there was ever an issue we can all agree on, this is it.

For too many years during the civil rights struggle, our people, including too many of our women, have been spit on, beaten, raped and killed in search of their basic rights. Our little girls should not have to worry about being raped and mangled in public restrooms like throw away dolls.

Let us all recognize our responsibility and take action on this issue. We are all first-class citizens, worthy and valuable to our families, community and to God.

Sherrice, may your innocent soul rest in peace.



SHERRICE IVERSON



CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

More signs of hope

By Bernice Powell Jackson
Special to Sentinel-Voice

If you only watch television uncritically and only know the stereotypes of young African-American men, you might believe they are all gang members and criminals. But there are millions of young black men who are making positive contributions not only to their own communities, but to the whole nation.

LeAlan Jones and Lloyd Newman, two Chicago 18 year-olds are two of them. Jones and Newman have received a host of awards for their journalistic work which tells the story of their neighborhood. Newman lives in the notorious Ida B. Wells housing project.

Their radio documentary, Remorse: The 14 Stories of Eric Morse, was aired on National Public Radio and told the story of Eric Morse, the 5 year-old who was pushed out a window by two boys, 10 and 11 years old, when he refused to steal candy for them. For this outstanding story Jones and Newman received the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, making them the youngest ever to receive the prestigious award and the first radio documentary to win the prize. Working with journalist David Isay, Jones and Newman won the grand prize over eight other journalists.

The two young men were not out looking for journalism prizes when they made the documentary. "We were trying to help the community so that this won't happen again," said Newman in a recent Jet magazine article. "To throw a 5 year-old out the window ...

makes no sense," he added.

While they were happy to win the award, they believe that the cost was too high. "I'm still looking at the death of a 5 year-old, and for me to win an award, I can't forget that," said Jones, adding, "If I could give that award back to bring Eric back, I would."

Jones and Newman interviewed their friends and neighbors about Eric Morse's death. They also talked to relatives of the victim and the suspects. Eric Morse's mother gave her only interview to the

young men. "She felt comfortable with us because she knew we would understand what she was going through. We come from the same environment," Newman explained.

The two boys who killed Eric were convicted and were sentenced to a maximum security juvenile prison, becoming the nation's youngest children to be so sentenced.

In addition to the Robert Kennedy prize, Jones and Newman have also won a



Bernice Powell Jackson

Peabody Award and a Hillman Foundation award for their documentary. Their first radio documentary, Ghetto Life 101, done when they were 14 year-olds, won more than a dozen national and international awards.

They have recently written a book, Our America: Life and Death on the South Side of Chicago.

A VOICE FROM THE HILL

One little step....

By George Wilson
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Recently, President Clinton hosted a ceremony in the White House to apologize to the survivors of a sinister experiment that was conducted over 40 years ago in the name of science.

A group of African-American men who lived in Tuskegee, Ala. were used as guinea pigs in a sanctioned government experiment which allowed some of them to be carriers of syphilis without their knowledge. Even though penicillin was available, these men weren't treated and were allowed to infect others.

After years of fighting, the government admitted that a terrible wrong had taken place and provided a settlement to those affected.

According to those who had the task of providing the proper "spin" or interpretation of the

event, the move was a way of winning the confidence of African-Americans so that we would have trust in the medical establishment. The other purpose was to bridge the racial gap that infects America in the same way that maladies like syphilis infect their hosts.

From the day our ancestors made their involuntary sojourn to these shores, mistreatment

has been the order of the day. As horrible as the Tuskegee Experiment was, it certainly wasn't the only time that African-Americans have been on the receiving end of "science running amuck." I think about the African-Americans who were used in experiments with LSD and those who find their homes located close to a toxic

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