

# Economists: U.S. recession linked to crime

By *Nayaba Arinde*  
Special to Sentinel-Voice  
NEW YORK (NNPA) —  
“For many people of color, this is not a recession, it’s a depression,” said Dr. Kirkland Vaughns, an associate professor at Adelphi University. “If Whites were unemployed at this 50 percent rate, they’d be calling it a depression.”

Economists and elected officials may go back and forth about whether or not the country is actually in a recession, but people across the nation are feeling a pinch in their wallets. And when money’s tight, crime sometimes gets hyped.

The Memorial Day shootings of eight males in three separate incidents in Harlem has spurred yet another demand to address violent crime in urban areas.

While no one is suggesting that New York is about to return to urban grittiness of the ’70s and ’80s, social scientists, criminologists and inner-city residents are

watching with informed anticipation both the recession and crime rate figures.

Even folk who go out of their way to ignore political machinations, cannot shield themselves from the economy.

Every day, published reports or electronic news of all genres show how basic food prices are creeping up with a vengeance, what with gas prices also going through the roof.

Then rents are taking bigger chunks of steady paychecks, foreclosures are on the upswing, and all manner of services and resources are being slashed by all levels of city and state government.

“I don’t think people have very many options if unemployment is at 50 percent,” psychiatrist and author Dr. James McIntosh told the AmNews. “They’ve cut all the benefits, there’s no housing, no work. People have to see an alternative.”

Far from the governing bodies being unaware of the

circumstances that drive the desperate to consider criminal enterprise, McIntosh said,

“I think they plan on it. Look at the criminal justice system; their style of policing. They create the problem in particular communities, then they have extra observations and monitoring in terms of police officers; then they put the people in jail and make money off of it.”

Said Dr. Vaughns, a professor of clinical psychology and psychological analyst, “I have no empirical data that there is a correlation between recession and the increase in the crime rate, and I don’t think there is any [data], but I absolutely believe that there is one... People are really losing faith in the system. I think that’s why Barack Obama’s message of change and hope is so powerful — because people are really in a state of despair. The government is

supposed to act like a parent in certain ways. It has parental functions as far as families and communities, and when things get really bad, the government is supposed to step in and serve and contain anxieties. The government is supposed to motivate and keep hope alive. Our government has taken the opposite role, and people see the breakdown of this relationship — and the government’s blatant indifference.”

It’s worse than is being reported, said Vaughns, who also works as a psychologist at Hempstead High School. The government, he continued, is supposed to “provide not just meaningful work, but work where you can earn a living, and I think, just as the government turns on us, we begin to turn on each other.”

The NYPD declares that crime is down 2.7 percent

from 2006, but acknowledges that murders and shootings are up by over 10 percent each. Police Commissioner Ray Kelly claims that the prevalence of illegal guns is what’s driving up the numbers in gun crime.

Comparative Compstat numbers for this time last year in the 28th Precinct have an increase of just one incident in felony assaults, which includes use of fire arms weapon. Rapes are up 900 percent, however. In the neighboring 32nd Precinct, felony assaults are up 21.3 percent.

The NYPD did not respond to a request for comment.

Meanwhile, according to other crime analysts, the numbers don’t amount to a hill of beans in the final analysis.

“To paraphrase my favorite line from Mark Twain, we

should use statistics as a drunk uses a lamppost — for support and not for illumination,” said a stats-skeptical Marq Claxton, retired detective and spokesman for civil rights group 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement.

“To show a statistical analysis on these types of tragedies is useless and out of context because it does nothing to deter these situations. It is not part of a solution. It is so irrelevant in the face of tragedy. It is a way to keep the focus away from governmental failures that have exacerbated the problem of violence in our communities. The other part of it, though, is what is our responsibility? What can we do ourselves to address the problems, aside from what the government is supposed to be doing?”

By *Nayaba Arinde* writes for the *Amsterdam News*.

## Military

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wide policy governing recruitment in public schools. The policy should defend students’ and parents’ rights to withhold information from the military, limit military recruiter access to high school campuses, protect student safety, and ensure educational integrity, the ACLU said. It should also clearly inform public high school students about their rights in relation to military recruitment, protect students from coercive military recruiter practices, and consistently enforce such procedures and guidelines across the school district, the civil liberties group said.

### Sexual abuse by military recruiters

A CBS News investigation in 2006 reported over 100 young women who expressed interest in the military were sexually assaulted by recruiters, raped on recruiting office couches, assaulted in government cars and groped en route to entrance exams. Many of the victims were under 17 years of age. The Army alone had 53 allegations of sexual misconduct that year, but a spokesman defended that it “is not indicative of the entire command of 8,000 recruiters.”

An Associated Press investigation revealed most recruiters found guilty of sexual misconduct were only disciplined administratively, facing a reduction in rank or forfeiture of pay. Military and civilian prosecutions remain rare.

The ACLU wants the U.S. to eliminate the military recruitment provision from the No Child Left Behind Act; create accessible grievance procedures for recruiter abuses; apply meaningful punishments to recruiters who engage in abusive, harassing, or deceptive recruitment practices; and create a “Recruit’s Bill of Rights” that must be publicized and posted in recruitment stations to detail opt-out procedures and the right not to enlist.

The U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child received the ACLU report because it oversees the relevant international protocol. The committee was to review the report before late May questioning of a U.S. government delegation on its compliance with protocol obligations in Geneva.

The report also criticizes U.S. detention of children at Guantanamo and U.S.-run facilities overseas without recognizing their juvenile status or observing international juvenile justice standards. Details of U.S. denial of asylum to former child soldiers under immigration provisions intended to bar their victimizers and child victims of human rights abuses denied protection in the U.S. are included in the report.

*Jesse Muhammad* writes for the *Final Call*.

## Your Horoscope Says... June 12-18

### ARIES

Be modest! Don’t just be smug and cool about your greatness. This week get in touch with your limitations and acknowledge them. You’re not doing it in order to fix anything. You’re just enlarging your capacity for self-acceptance.

Soul Affirmation: I am a giver of good words this week.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 17, 22

### TAURUS

This could turn out to be the most argument-filled week you’ve had for a while. Your feelings could be deeply hurt if you try to force your sense of rightness off on anyone else. Chill. Remember that in the past when people were cantankerous you could find pleasure in nature, or animals.

Soul Affirmation: I put my charm to work for me this week.

Lucky Numbers: 13, 39, 55

### GEMINI

Your good will and intentions towards others will reap you an inheritance of abundance and wealth. You will be blessed with many good wishes and enjoy them in the company of family and friends.

Soul Affirmation: I appear to others what I know myself to be.

Lucky Numbers: 30, 32, 33

### CANCER

Your dignity and composure is a sure asset this week. Be Mr. or Ms. Cool Breeze. In touchy situations you have the ability to maintain a high level of emotional balance and a calm disposition. Use these qualities to the fullest this week. You have the know-how to re-direct negative feelings into a positive solution.

Soul Affirmation: Superficiality is often the best route to clarity.

Lucky Numbers: 20, 28, 31

### LEO

Start this week to make a difference for tomorrow. You can determine the prosperity of your future by making difficult decisions in the present. Rearrange your priorities and decide what are the important things to you. Make a list. Write them down and act on it now!

Soul Affirmation: As chances come around again. I take advantage of them.

Lucky Numbers: 17, 50, 54

### VIRGO

You are often superb at exercising good judgement and rational decision-making. Yet sometimes you are rash. Flip to the observant side of your mentality this week. You will soon find yourself in a situation where there will be strife if you are not careful.

Soul Affirmation: A cheerful soul should be wrapped in a cheerful package.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 36, 44

### LIBRA

Just to prove to yourself once again how lucky you are you should fly into the face of bad predictions. Gamble this week in business, relationships, love — something. Remain truly confident that things will come out in a way that will satisfy you.

Soul Affirmation: Change is my middle name.

Lucky Numbers: 4, 28, 37

### SCORPIO

Move through your social environments and festive occasions this week without stopping even for a little while to listen to rumors. Rumors are often untrue. And for goodness sake believe only good things about friends and your lover.

Soul Affirmation: I keep my eyes open for business opportunities this week.

Lucky Numbers: 15, 30, 45

### SAGITTARIUS

Keep focused. Your energies are likely to be spread out this week. Your attention is likely to be pulled in many directions. Let yourself be seduced by the things that interest you most. Concentrate on your affairs. Others need you, but they can wait.

Soul Affirmation: I find a source of strength in someone I love.

Lucky Numbers: 7, 11, 21

### CAPRICORN

Being stubborn won’t get the job done. Work with others so they can work for you. Your ideas are not always the best ideas, so don’t push them too hard this week. You might find yourself in an awkward position with no allies. Give in to your emotional needs, and don’t be afraid to let you guard down.

Soul Affirmation: I let go and let the spirit take control.

Lucky Numbers: 20, 42, 54

### AQUARIUS

Your self-confidence is making you glow all over! People are attracted to your outlook this week, and you may be deluged with offers. Some may not be sincere, but trust your fabulous instincts and you’ll pick and choose what’s real for you.

Soul Affirmation: Clinging to the old will inhibit my growth this week.

Lucky Numbers: 1, 3, 10

### PISCES

Find motivation within yourself to complete a task that has been hanging around too long. You will want to play later in the week, and you’ll feel happier then with a clear mind. Remember that you’re the boss of your emotions.

Soul Affirmation: My imagination is the source of my happiness.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 27, 55