

## Missing

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 for newspapers, including the *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times* and *New York Newsday*.

Stacey Peterson nearly became a household name, producing 723,000 results on Google, a world-wide web search engine. Norman's name produced 177,000 results.

What's the difference between the two women?

Race is the difference, according to Jackson Police Chief Malcolm McMillin, who is White.

"As far as the interest by the national media in the story, I think race probably had an impact," the police chief said in a story by David Schoetz, posted on ABCnews.go.com while Norman was still missing.

"It's a small college in the South. It's the daughter of simple people who maybe are not important outside of their circle, and maybe we don't attach the same importance to them that we do for other people," said McMillin in the article.

According to FBI statistics, in 2007, a total of 814,967 missing person records were entered into the National Crime Information Center's Missing Person File. Over 25 percent of those missing are African-Americans and they are only 12 percent of the U.S. population. Whites make-up 66 percent of the U.S. population and account for nearly 63 percent of the missing persons. Others include Latinos. "There is a whole lot of brown and Black people (missing)," said Rebekah Howard, partner and founder of Image Pro, a public relations marketing firm, in Miami.

In May 2004, Howard's niece, Tamika Huston, then 24, disappeared from Spartanburg, S.C. A year later her case received national media attention, not as the story of a missing person



Latasha Norman

but a missing person who was ignored by mainstream media because of her race. Huston was missing for over a year.

Huston and her boyfriend, Christopher Hampton, 25, were arguing about money when Hampton threw a hot iron at Huston hitting her in the head. He panicked after killing her and drove around with her body for hours until he buried her in a wooded area in Duncan, S.C., marking the spot with a cross made from tree branches, he told the *Herald-Journal* of Spartanburg.

In August 2005, Hampton was charged with Huston's murder.

Media outlets such as "America's Most Wanted" helped authorities by airing Huston's story in March 2005. After the broadcast, an anonymous tipster provided Spartanburg officers with the essential details needed to solve the case.

"Media serves two purposes," Howard said in an interview. "Not only for attention and new information, but it puts pressure on law enforcement in addition to putting pressure on the perpetrator."

The color within the missing persons population is often overlooked because "national networks in particular, have found a formula for producing miniature soap operas," said Howard, citing the 2002 Laci Peterson case involving a missing White, pregnant 27-year old, who was killed by her husband.

Howard speculates that

stories involving White females raise ratings for the networks.

"Media drives the story. There are a lot of juicy tidbits but no one knows that because the media didn't put the story in the spotlight," Howard said.

Early media attention is crucial, Howard says.

Sgt. Noel Leader agrees. "It sounds a public alarm," says the police retiree and co-founder of 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care. That's a Brooklyn, N.Y.-based organization, founded in 1995 to serve as a voice for the Black community in the justice system.

Around the time Huston's story was acknowledged by the media, Natalie Holloway, 18, a White female, vanished during her trip to Aruba in May 2005. Her story immediately took over local and national news stations.

"You would see another



Tamika Huston

family going through the same pain, and you can't fault them," Howard said. "It just makes you so angry. Why do they [missing White females] get around-the-world coverage? What about those other women?"

Howard said that in her attempts to reach out, she found that she was being strung along by editors and producers.

The issue, Suggs and Leader agree, has to do with the lack of diversity in the newsroom. "We need to de-

velop our own media outlets. Stop supporting those that don't support the things that are important to us," Leader says.

According to the Radio-Television News Directors' 2007 annual study of diversity, Blacks represent 9.5 percent of those in TV newsrooms and are 4.2 percent of TV news directors.

Leader advocates more media ownership among African-Americans as another solution. Meanwhile, families of missing persons must deal with other issues besides the lack of media attention.

Leader advises that families must constantly ask questions regarding the objectives and strategies as well as continue to check up on the status of cases with officers. "Don't be intimidated," he said.

As a result of Howard's efforts, NBC producer Josh Mingelwoods committed to

the 2005 story that posed the question why Holloway became a household name and Huston did not. *USA Today* reporter Mark Memmott also wrote an article on the case.

Howard now uses her experiences and expertise to help others. She and her family are launching the Tamika Huston Foundation for the Missing, which will assist and support families, particularly minorities with the process associated with finding and solving the cases of missing loved ones.

The foundation website, www.TamikaHuston.com, is under construction. Howard says it will provide media relations and teach families how to interact with law enforcement in missing persons cases.

The foundation was launched on Dec. 11, Howard said. "That would have been Tamika's 28th birthday."

## Your Horoscope Says... April 2-8

### ARIES

In all your endeavors this week, be extra diligent. The timing is great for new business ventures, but stay alert and use your better judgment. You are going to gain insight in an area that troubled you up until now. Consult with friends and loved ones.

Soul Affirmation: When I feel good about myself, the world feels good to me.

Lucky Numbers: 6, 15, 22

### TAURUS

Everybody should be in a good mood this week, and you'll want to join friends or family in sharing food and feelings. You may be asked to change your opinion about something you believe in. Make the change. It will enhance your spiritual growth.

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

Lucky Numbers: 9, 23, 37

### GEMINI

If you seem spaced out this week don't worry about it. Fill your mind with a vision of love for the entire planet. Use your gifts to assist others in seeing the world as you do, in glorious color. Check the details on paperwork that you have to do, dreamer.

Soul Affirmation: Emptiness inside creates the space that I can fill with love.

Lucky Numbers: 17, 21, 29

### CANCER

Heavy vibrations could cause you to slow down and think a lot. That's good, because slowing down is just what you need. Remember to think of the positive. Reject the negative and you'll have a wonderful week.

Soul Affirmation: The slowness of my week gives me time to refresh my energy.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 29, 30

### LEO

Give your busy brain a rest and work your body this week. It's a great week for physical activity that can loosen up muscles and relieve tensions. Also think about your weight problem if you have one. You'll receive some practical advice from a distant relative.

Soul Affirmation: I let my mind go slack and tighten up my body.

Lucky Numbers: 23, 29, 40

### VIRGO

Family responsibilities may feel like a chore this week. If you relinquish control of the situation, a natural order will occur, and things will organize themselves. You can let people be who they are. That makes it easier for you to be who you are.

Soul Affirmation: I let go and let the spirit run my life this week.

Lucky Numbers: 41, 54, 55

### LIBRA

Be on the lookout for love from a distance source — not just romantic love, but the warm glow that comes from someone who cares deeply for you. Think hard about who your lover is. Make a few phone calls. The instant you hear the voice you'll know — this is the one.

Soul Affirmation: Truth is revealed in the smallest grain of sand.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 29, 27

### SCORPIO

Work calls and you're not completely happy with current divisions of labor. Do your part as a member of the team and you'll be glad that you did. Others will notice that you are a committed team player. Look for financial rewards from your hard work.

Soul Affirmation: Joy is my houseguest this week.

Lucky Numbers: 42, 44, 45

### SAGITTARIUS

Business looks good this week as you discover a new way of increasing exposure to your product. Let hope and optimism lead you into new beginnings and fresh starts. All vibes are good, go! Take a good friend with you for help and company on your journey into newness.

Soul Affirmation: Make-believe is real while I believe it.

Lucky Numbers: 12, 36, 49

### CAPRICORN

This will be one of those weeks that seem like one you've lived before. Good! Make some changes in the way you see things and you'll make the old new, the routine will become exciting. Communications skill should be excellent. Have some good long talks with relative.

Soul Affirmation: I find happiness by making those around me happy.

Lucky Numbers: 26, 34, 52

### AQUARIUS

Travel has been on your mind for some time. Buy the tickets. Fuel the car. New surroundings will bring fresh ways of looking at things, which is exactly what you need. A trip that involves creative expression is called for.

Soul Affirmation: I give myself a chance to see how good I can be.

Lucky Numbers: 24, 51, 52

### PISCES

Keep a low voice. Let your presence supply the power, not your words or deeds. Great reward can come from travel with a friend or sweetheart. Remember something that a co-worker has been saying. There is a blessing in it.

Soul Affirmation: I let go of all resentment and love my life.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 32, 55

## Stabbing

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the first floor, was doing laundry in the basement, investigators said. The children's parents were not home.

Samantha Revelus called authorities, but the dying girl quickly gave the phone to Saraphina, Milton police said.

Nolan said an officer patrolling the neighborhood arrived less than a minute after the call and heard screaming inside the apartment. He kicked the door in and saw Revelus decapitate his 5-year-old sister.

As other officers arrived, Kerby ran into a bedroom and began to attack Saraphina. Two officers shot him, Nolan said.

The parents made the final arrangements for Saturday's burials, Guerrier said. "The reasons why it happened, what happened, how it happened is still just a blur to them," he said. "They can't even imagine it."