

American Renaissance

There is not a truth existing which I fear, or would wish unknown to the whole world.

— Thomas Jefferson

The Racial Politics of Murder

The race of the victim may be all that matters.

by William Robertson Boggs

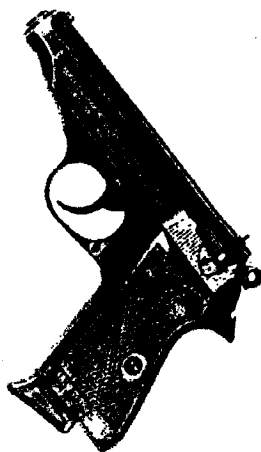
Perhaps the most publicized murders in America in the last few years have been the killings of black men in the New York neighborhoods of Howard Beach and Bensonhurst. They became national incidents and were made into symbols of white bigotry. The very names of the neighborhoods are now intellectual shorthand for the oppression of blacks. Even though these were unusual, thoroughly atypical crimes, this did not prevent the press from treating them as if they were characteristic of the way white people treat blacks.

The furor stirred up by these killings is all the more noteworthy because of the studied silence that greets similar crimes when the victims are white. There is hostility in this country to news suggesting that blacks are just as capable of racial crimes as whites. Since black racism doesn't fit neatly into the theory of blacks as innocent victims, many people profess a fear that an open discussion of it would fuel a white backlash. Nevertheless, taken in the overall context of inter-racial crime, the way America reacted to the deaths in Howard Beach and Bensonhurst was not only disproportionate but dangerous.

Although the Howard Beach incident was widely viewed as an unprovoked attack by whites on peaceable blacks, the facts are much more ambiguous. One evening in 1986, some white teenagers were driving a girl home when three black men walked out in front of their car and were nearly hit. An argument broke out, in which one of the blacks shouted, "F*** you, honky," another flashed a knife, and one reportedly stuck his

head through a car window and spat in the face of one of the whites. The whites drove away furious, and after dropping off the girl returned with baseball bats. They attacked and injured one of the blacks, and another was hit and killed by a passing car as he tried to escape.

Since the attackers were white, the victims were black, and the word "nigger" was used, this incident became a national sensation. It fueled a flood of analysis and white self-criticism. Blacks held rallies, marches and demonstrations. Then-mayor Ed Koch, who presided over a city whose citizens were committing about 1,700 murders every year, chose to call this



one the most horrendous crime in all his years in office. Blacks demanded and got a special prosecutor to try the case, since the usual procedures were allegedly shot through with racism. The whites were, of course, duly convicted.

The Bensonhurst killing, three years later, was clearly unprovoked. A gang of bat-swinging whites started chasing four blacks who they thought had come to visit a white girl in the neighborhood. One of the whites reportedly yelled, "To hell with beat-

ing them up. Forget the bats; I'm going to shoot the nigger." He then pulled out a gun and shot a 16-year-old to death.

Despite press reports of the incident, the whites were not simply lying in wait to attack any blacks who came along. They were on the lookout for a specific group of blacks who they had heard were planning to invade their "territory," and repeatedly asked each other "Is it them?" before attacking. The purely racial explanation for the killing is further weakened by the fact that one of the young men who helped round up bats for the group was a Bensonhurst resident named Russell Gibbons, *who is black*. He was, and continues to be, a close friend of one of the whites, Keith Mondello, who was later convicted in connection with the killing.

None of this mattered in the outpouring of white soul-searching and analysis that followed the killing. Blacks used the incident for anti-white provocations. Film maker Spike Lee blamed all whites for the shooting, declaring that Mayor Ed Koch's finger was on the trigger of the murder weapon. Black demonstrators, chanting and waving signs, marched through Bensonhurst—not just once—but four different times, condemning the whole neighborhood for the crime.

During another demonstration, protesters chanting, "What's coming? War!" tried to block traffic on the Brooklyn Bridge. When police moved in to keep the bridge open, marchers attacked them and injured 23 officers. As the crowd turned back from the bridge, hundreds ran through the streets, kicking cars and screaming insults at whites. One black activist vowed, "From this day forward, for every black child that we bury, we are

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Sir — I agree that there is a process of silent self-dispossession at work. Guilt, complacency of numbers, and the actual structure of our governing principles are all still effective in keeping “us” from an urgently felt cohesion vs. “them.” I think the big problem with your approach, the thing that keeps it from selling to a broad based audience, is precisely the couching of the debate in an us-them mode. The “us” is too heterogeneous, united more by a common horror than common conviction. To the extent that your publication emphasizes the Us-for-usness of the issue instead of the Ugh!-Them, you’ve got my ear.

I do agree wholeheartedly that the excesses of affirmative action and the “nanny state” are a national shame, entirely counterproductive, and a moral hell. These things really must stop, and it disgusts me to hear about all of the righteous bending-over-backward advocated by social workers who can opt out of “helping” any time they burn out.

I think there is widespread dismay among the good-hearted over the fruits of liberalism. I do think that Americans need to be taught to be more tough-minded. But focusing on the inherent deficiencies of blacks and Hispanics is simply going to get you David Duked. You’re going to be thought of as white trash in a coat and tie.

I don’t mind at all the idea of examining the taboo of race honestly. I sympathize with you for all the hell you’ll get if you manage to keep the ear of people worth talking to. Otherwise you’ll spin safely off into crackpotdom with strutters and nerds of every description.

M. Meldahl, Massachusetts

Sir — I was at first dismayed to read Marian Evans’ analysis of crime in New York City. It hardly seems fair to extrapolate from current arrest rates, by race, and then assume that if the city had an all-black population there would be three times as many muggings and two and a half times as many murders as today. Blacks are poorer and less well educated than whites. These circumstances are well known to be associated with crime of all kinds. It was my initial reaction to assume that if New York City had an all-black (or all-Hispanic) population, the proportions of rich and poor, educated and uneducated would mirror those of the mixed-race city of today. Crime rates would then presumably be no different.

On the other hand, there is not a single all-black city anywhere in the world in which wealth and education even begin to mirror today’s population (including whites) of New York City. I confess that any realistic conception of an all-black New York City begins to resemble Detroit, East St. Louis, or even Lagos more than it does today’s New York. Perhaps crime rates really would be as high as Miss Evans suggests. This raises the uncomfortable question of whether black crime is the result of poverty and lack of education or whether crime, poverty, and lack of education are *all three* the result of some other murky cause.

I maintain a devout agnosticism on questions like this. In today’s political climate I don’t believe a publication that raises them is one that I shall be leaving out on the coffee table.

P. Holzbauer, Trenton (NJ)

Sir — Marian Evans may be interested to know that the June 4, 1990

issue of *Fortune* magazine published revealing figures about inter-racial crime for the nation as a whole. It says, “87,029 blacks were violently attacked by whites, while 786,660 whites were violently attacked by blacks.” There are less than one sixth as many blacks as whites in this country, yet they commit 9 times more violent inter-racial assaults. This means that a black person is 56 times more likely to attack a white person than vice versa.

Edward J. Toner, Howell (NJ)

Sir — I read Marian Evans’ article on crime in New York City, and couldn’t help wondering why journalists always concentrate on things like rape and murder. They are horrible, all right, but let’s face it: Even in a place like New York City, your chances of being killed or raped are statistically small. In New York State, a white man between the ages of 15 and 24—the most likely ages for victims—has only a 0.018% chance of being murdered in a given year. For all I know, he’s more likely to drive his car into a telephone pole.

As a resident of New York City, I don’t walk around constantly worried that I’m going to be killed or robbed. The worst part of this city is what I know it will do, not what I’m afraid it will do. I am confident that when I go to work tomorrow, no one is going to kill me. But I am also confident that I will see mountains of garbage in the streets and repulsive graffiti on every surface within reach of a spray can. I will see and smell ugly, demented people in the subway and in every refuge from the cold. There is a good chance that I will hear someone shout obscenities in a loud voice, that a sales clerk will insult me, that I will be elbowed in the subway, and that I will have to step over a puddle of vomit. All this is what makes New York City a hive of degeneracy—not the slight chance of being murdered.

You figure that an all-white New York might have only 15% of the muggings it has today. Too bad no one keeps statistics by race on graffiti, elbowings in the subway, or lunches lost on the sidewalk. I bet that if Miss Evans did the same kind of tally for that sort of thing as she did for murder or rape, she’d get the same dramatic results.

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going to bury five of theirs." Even middle-class blacks lost their heads. One wondered, in a *New York Times* guest editorial entitled "Will I Be Next?", whether "white people secretly aspire to intern us all in jails or concentration camps—to permanently do away with us?"

The significance of these killings lies more in the reactions to them—both black and white—than in the incidents themselves. If America were really seething with white racism, violence against blacks would presumably be common. It is because it is so rare that Howard Beach and Bensonhurst became huge sensations.

In the agony of self-recrimination that followed, no one bothered to look up the statistics on inter-racial crime. When whites do violence—rape, murder, assault—how often do they choose black victims? If America is a nation of racists shouldn't they target blacks most of the time? At least half of the time? They don't. The annual report from the Department of Justice shows that when whites commit violence they do it to blacks 2.4 percent of the time. Blacks, on the other hand, choose white victims *more than half* the time.

What about inter-racial murder? Recently, the Boston police were widely criticized for believing Charles Stuart's claim that his pregnant wife had been killed by a black man, whereas it was he who had shot her. In fact, the police had good reason to believe him. In those cases in which the race of the killer is known, blacks kill twice as many whites as whites kill blacks. Given the disproportions in the population between blacks and whites, this means that, statistically, any given black person is more than 14 times as likely to kill a white person

than the reverse. The figures for inter-racial rape or assault are even more lopsided. In New York City, for example, any white is over 300 times more likely to be assaulted by a gang of blacks than is a black by a gang of whites.

But how are racially motivated crimes by blacks against whites reported, and how does America react to them? A month after the Bensonhurst shooting, an almost identical crime was committed in the Bronx by blacks. A white got out of his car to make a telephone call on East Tremont Avenue. Two blacks approached and asked, "What are you white guys doing on Tremont? You don't belong here." An argument followed and one of the blacks pulled a gun and shot the white, wounding him in the stomach. This incident provoked no marches, no hand-wringing, and scarcely any press coverage. When a black minister, who had taken the lead in berating whites after the Bensonhurst killing, was asked about the Tremont shooting, he replied, "I don't know that that's racism as I define it . . . There's a difference between racism and revenge."

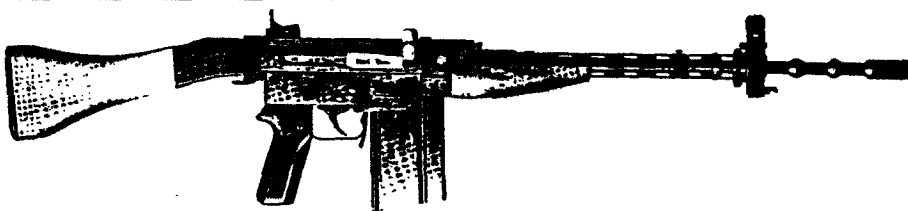
There wasn't even any revenge in the death of white, 23-year-old, Danny Gilmore. One evening, in July 1988, he was driving his pickup truck through a black part of Cleveland, looking for the freeway. A black man on a moped pulled out without looking and bumped the truck. He was unin-

jured, but a crowd of about 40 black men soon showed up. A few started pouring beer into Mr. Gilmore's truck. Someone tried to get into the cab and grab the keys. A scuffle broke out and the blacks mercilessly thrashed Mr. Gilmore. He broke away, stumbled in front of his truck, and collapsed on the street. One of the blacks started the engine, and as the crowd cheered, he crushed Mr. Gilmore under the wheels of his own truck. Mr. Gilmore was covered with so much blood that when the medics finally got to him they assumed he was black.

The black reporter for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* who covered the murder immediately recognized that the story was racial dynamite, but his white editors buried it and, over his protests, suppressed the race angle. The killing got little local attention and no national coverage. The Cleveland homicide detective who covered the case explained it this way: "The mayor's office doesn't want us to have racial killings in this town, so Danny Gilmore's death wasn't a racial crime. And I'm the tooth fairy."

A similar crime was committed in Philadelphia just a few months before the Bensonhurst killing. A gang of Hispanics, who had been prevented from crashing a white party, vowed to take revenge. A week later, they did. Since they couldn't find any of the people who had kept them out of the party, they shot and killed the first white youngster they could find. This incident was ignored by the national media and provoked no marches, demonstrations, or public breast-beating.

A more recent incident took place in May, 1990. One Saturday night in Tampa, a dozen blacks showed up at a hangout popular with white teenagers. They were looking for a fight, were accommodated with some minor fist-cuffs, and left vowing to return with reinforcements. An hour later, they found some of the whites in a parking lot five blocks away and attacked



them. The whites met the attack with their fists. The blacks then started swinging clubs, and when one opened fire with a pistol, the whites scattered. One of the whites didn't get away in time and was cornered by seven blacks. According to a woman who saw the attack from her window, the blacks beat the 19-year old white to death with two-by-fours. "I could see a piece of wood come down and crack against his head," she said. She told police that with every blow, the assailants said, "Don't ever f*** with us. Don't ever f*** with us again." Police later found the attackers and have charged four black adults and two juveniles with first-degree murder.

In the famous Howard Beach incident, the whites who cornered a black could have killed him with their baseball bats but did not. The man who did die was accidentally hit by a car. The deliberate killing of a white in Tampa is insignificant local news, while the accidental killing of a black in New York is national news. When whites kill people for racial reasons it

If millions of blacks think their government is trying to exterminate them, what else are they prepared to believe?

is front-page stuff and cause for agonized self-examination. When blacks or Hispanics kill whites for racial reasons there is silence.

A partial exception to this rule was the recent Central Park rape, in which a white woman was gang-raped, beaten, and left for dead by a pack of young blacks and Hispanics. This was met with a torrent of press commentary, but no white marches, demonstrations, or "revenge." And even though one of the attackers reportedly said "Let's get a white woman," many commentators carefully avoided calling the rape a racial crime, arguing that the woman's race did not matter.

But to return to the cold eloquence of statistics, what are we to make of the fact that more than half of the victims of black violence are white, while only 2.4 percent of the victims of white violence are black? How much of this difference is due to anti-white racism?

No one knows; no one is even interested. When a black man kills or robs a white man, no one makes it his business to wonder if the motive was racial. There are no government commissions, watchdog groups, civil rights activists, or editorial boards constantly on the alert for black racism. When a black kills a white, it's homicide; when a white kills a black, it's racism.

There are several reasons for this double standard. First, the official theory of race relations requires it. Blacks are said to be unsuccessful in America because of white racism. Any suggestion that blacks are at all responsible for their own failures is called "blaming the victim." Blacks are eight times more likely than whites to be in jail, four times more likely to have illegitimate children, and four and a half times more likely to be on welfare. If white racism is what causes all this, there must be an enormous amount of it around. It must therefore be denounced—repeatedly and furiously—whenever it is found.

This is why the Howard Beach and Bensonhurst killings were portrayed as unprovoked white violence intended for the first black passerby. It is because such purely random anti-black violence—and even incidents that can be made to *look* like it—are so rare that Howard Beach and Bensonhurst were made into sensations. Such incidents are vital to the theory of white responsibility for black failure. The image of blacks as innocent victims is clouded by incidents suggesting that blacks may not always be so innocent. It's easiest to ignore them.

Another reason why America glosses over black misbehavior is that it is thought mean-spirited to inquire into it. Simply to state facts that reflect badly on blacks is thought to be boorish, perhaps even "racist." This is why the statistics on violent inter-racial crime are nothing more than an obscure footnote in a dusty government publication. If they suggested that whites, rather than blacks, were racist, we would have heard them so often we would know them by heart.

Of course, by smoothing over black misbehavior, liberal America treats blacks as moral inferiors. Whenever anyone gingerly raises the subject of black crime, someone is sure to offer "root cause" explanations that put the

Hollywood Does Howard Beach

The media promote the view that whites are crude racists while blacks want only to live in peace. The Howard Beach killing (see main story) was made into a two-hour television docudrama, which twisted the facts at every turn to fit this accepted view. In its depiction of the original face-off between the whites and blacks, the blacks don't walk in front of the car, don't flash a knife, don't spit in anyone's face, don't say "F*** you, honky." In fact they don't do anything at all. The whites deliberately try to run them down, and shout "Get out of the neighborhood, niggers,"—a line invented purely for television. They return with baseball bats for the sole purpose of ridding the neighborhood of blacks.

White brutality is consistently exaggerated. For example, in real life, the black who was beaten needed five stitches; on television he gets a concussion and needs 67 stitches. The thesis of the TV version is that blacks merely had to wander into Howard Beach in order to be attacked. In fact, the bowling alley across the street from where the attack took place has a black bowling league; blacks are in the neighborhood all the time.

One of the white Howard Beach defendants has an ex-girlfriend who is black. She is furious about what she calls the TV version's "horrendous" distortions. It's clear that scriptwriter Steve Ballo and producer Ken Kaufman weren't trying to be truthful. They were making propaganda and passing it off as history.

No one, of course, is planning a film about the death of Danny Gilmore, the white man who was run over with his own truck, even though the story has all the elements of high drama: a brutal killing, a big city newspaper that covers up the facts, a brave black reporter who fights for truth, a streetwise detective who sees through the lies. If only whites had killed a black man, it would be the perfect Hollywood plot. ●

blame on whites. But whenever America tracks down a violent white racist, he is condemned as fully responsible for his actions. No root cause explanations for him. By offering excuses for blacks that it denies to whites, liberalism treat blacks as second-class citizens.

America's preoccupation with white racism has created a dangerous climate. Blacks have heard over and over that white bigotry thwarts them at every turn. But if, as one black spokesman recently explained to the *Wall Street Journal*, 90 percent of black people's problems would go away if racism were eliminated, why should they lift a finger to help themselves? If white people are responsible for their problems, white people must cure them.

Anyone who doubts the prevalence of this attitude need only reflect on the number of blacks who believe that drugs, rocketing black murder rates, and even AIDS are part of a govern-

ment campaign to exterminate black people. It is no longer only Louis Farrakhan and Angela Davis who believe this. *The Black Scholar* and *The Nation* write darkly of "genocide," and the editor of Brooklyn's *City Sun* is convinced of it. Even the National Urban League mutters about the possibility of genocide.

If millions of blacks are so deluded as to think their government is trying to exterminate them, what else are they prepared to believe? Will they not see "racism" in every white gesture, no matter how well intentioned? Such people are likely to be beyond the terms of rational discourse.

The problem, of course, is one that the white media have helped create. Their treatment of inter-racial crime makes rational discourse im-



possible. By making Howard Beach and Bensonhurst national sensations, and ignoring Tremont Avenue, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Tampa, they are foreclosing the frank discussion of race relations that solutions require. Ignoring disagreeable facts does not make them go away.

Recently, a white New York City high school student reflected in the *New York Times* about a group of blacks who attacked him because he was white. Did he complain about black racism? No. "Getting attacked because of my race made me look at myself and understand what I symbolize to others," he wrote; "It doesn't matter that I have not a single racist bone in my body; too many white people before me did." This boy didn't condemn the attack because it was racial; he *excused* it because it was racial. His solution? Vote for Jesse Jackson. ●

On the Trail of the Great Taboo, Part II

Mark Snyderman and Stanley Rothman, *The IQ Controversy*, Transaction Publishers, 1988, 310 pp. \$24.95

by Thomas Jackson

In the previous issue, Mr. Jackson summarized the authors' findings that there is the following general consensus among experts about IQ: IQ tests measure intelligence accurately, 60 to 70% of the differences in IQ between individuals is due to heredity, and IQ is important to success in life.

Racial differences in test scores are, of course, the touchiest issue in the whole IQ debate. Ever since the First World War, when large numbers of Americans first started taking IQ tests, average black scores have been about 15 points lower than white scores. With an average IQ of 85, only 16% of the black population scores over 100, while half the white population does. What accounts for these differences?

The most common explanation in the popular press is that the tests are

"culturally" biased against blacks. To make the case for bias it must be shown that there are specific, culture-oriented test problems that blacks consistently get wrong. However, in modern IQ tests there are no questions that only one racial group has particular trouble answering. Anyone who argues that the tests are biased must therefore prove a very difficult case: that every single question on the tests is equally biased.

Furthermore, if intelligence tests are culturally biased, it should be possible to devise a reliable test that is *not* biased. Despite repeated attempts to do so, no one has been able to develop a meaningful intelligence test on which blacks and whites score equally. Finally, if the tests are biased against blacks they are presumably biased against Asians as well. In fact, Asians have *higher* average IQ scores than whites, but no one ever suggests that the tests are culturally biased in their

favor. IQ and aptitude tests also tend to be almost equally valid for people of all races. They can predict the grades a child will get or how well an adult will do at a job, no matter what his race.

Another popular explanation for low black IQ scores is that blacks come from deprived environments. This undoubtedly has an effect on IQ. However, even when blacks and whites have the same backgrounds, in terms of family income and childhood advantages, blacks still have average IQ scores 12 to 15 points lower than comparable whites. American Indians and Mexican Americans often live in circumstances that are even more meager than those of blacks. Nevertheless, both groups consistently score better on IQ tests than blacks.

In cases where black children have been adopted by white parents, test results are the same as in other adoption studies: The children's IQs may