

DOUBLE STANDARD

David Simon [Slant, 7/18] expresses dismay over the Zimmerman verdict and expands his dismay and outrage against white-on-black violence in general. OK, I get that.

But where is his outrage over the rampant and tragic black-on-black violence and murder in Chicago and other large cities? Why doesn't he note that when OJ Simpson walked, cities didn't burn?

Double standard? Oh yeah.

*Jerry Ritter
Springfield*

GUILT OR INNOCENCE

In Eugene, we don't have a large percentage of blacks. Let's analyze Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman for our locale: If I were to appoint myself a neighborhood watch vigilante and roam the streets at night with a knife (I don't own a pistol), I could go up to people who my deficient psychology deems suspects and follow them. If I were responsible enough to call the police and ask if I should follow this "suspicious-looking kid" they would tell me, "No! Don't do this and let the police handle it." But emboldened by the night and my weapon, I heckle this innocent man. He is afraid and calls a relative but by then I am upon him. I want to kill this man, so I get into a physical confrontation with him.

Regardless of whether I receive a bloody nose or have the kid "use the concrete floor as a weapon," I kill the night stroller, who actually had just gone to the store to buy candy and is returning to his family's home.

Who *did* go out of his abode looking for a fight? Who had a weapon? Who approached the other person aggressively? And finally, who ended up dead?

I think the question of guilt or innocence (of me) should be an open and shut case. I should receive the maximum sentence. Three blacks and three whites (some of them men) should be the jury of peers.

*David Ivan Piccioni
Eugene*

PREVENT SUCH KILLINGS

The verdict in the case against George Zimmerman is part of a tragic event that could have easily been prevented. There is sharp disagreement over the verdict, but there can be no disagreement over the reason why Trayvon Martin is dead. George Zimmerman had a gun that night, and the state of Florida allowed him to carry it virtually anywhere despite a violent history. Virtually anybody roaming our neighborhoods with hidden handguns is the gun lobby's vision, but it is not the vision of the rest of the American public truly committed to safer communities.

We will work as long and as hard as it takes to prevent more tragedies like Trayvon Martin's. We recognize, at the end of the day, this is an enormous tragedy and a young man lost his life. Our sympathies continue to go out to Trayvon's family.

*Curtis Taylor
Eugene*

CLOUDY REASONING

So, if I understand this correctly, if you stalk and confront someone in the dark — get close enough to make them afraid enough to attack you out of fear of what you are doing — you can then shoot them for attacking you, and you get to call it self defense.

To clarify what might be seen as murky reasoning, in some parts of our great U.S.A. you can instigate a situation where you threaten any people and when they try to defend themselves you get to shoot them. You might even call it "standing your ground." The dead people do not get to call it. They tried to stand their ground and lost.

By similar cloudy reasoning: Don't shoot the person you are following if you are dark skinned; it doesn't work well the other way around.

*Leigh Henry
Eugene*

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