

# EDITORIAL/OPINION

## Black-on-Black Crime At Crisis Level

Violent crime in the U.S. has reached a level unprecedented in the history of our nation. Every 24 minutes, a murder is committed in the U.S. (18,000 murders occur in the U.S. each year.) If so many people were dying from a disease, it would be called a national epidemic. Every ten seconds a house is burgled; every seven minutes a woman is raped.

Violent crime can be found throughout the nation; in urban areas, in the suburbs, and the rural countryside. There can be no blinking away the fact that African-Americans are disproportionately involved in violent crime—both as offenders and victims.

Although African-Americans constitute only 13% of the total U.S. population, they make up 48 percent of the national prison population. (Some of this is due to racism in the judicial system.)

However, the facts are clear. In violent crimes committed by a single person, the vic-

tims in 25 percent of the cases claim that the attacker was an African-American.

African-Americans suffer unduly from violent crime. Murder is the leading cause of death among African-American males 24 to 34. (For white males in that age group, it is car and motorcycle accidents.) African-American men are eight times as likely to die in a homicide as are white men.

The typical violent crime involves two young African-American males who know each other and get into trivial altercations, which lead to serious injury or death, because they both have weapons.

Black-on-Black crime has reached such crisis proportions that African-American leaders have begun to discuss the issue in public forum. At last year's NAACP state convention held in Jessup, MD., a speaker told delegates that it "is up to African-Americans to do something about Black-on-Black crime."



## Along the Color Line

by Dr. Manning Marable

Dr. Manning Marable is professor of sociology and political science at Purdue University. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 140 newspapers internationally.

### "Intolerance in Education"

The New Right and many religious fundamentalists distinguish themselves from an earlier generation of American conservatives by their zealous advocacy of anti-intellectualism and educational intolerance of cultural and ideological diversity. Rightwing leader Phyllis Schlafly, for instance, has condemned what she terms "descriptive classroom discussions of fornication, homosexuality, contraceptives and abortion as though they were normal and acceptable practices." The New Right demands that social history reverse itself—that any discussion of contemporary social problems and issues should be banned, especially in the public schools—and that the sterile, white male-dominated culture of the early twentieth century should be firmly restored.

In the Moral Majority Report, Schlafly has called for a restoration of the male-dominated workplace: "It should certainly not be our social policy to move wives into the labor force...Who then is going to raise the children? The Reverend Jerry Falwell, founder of the Moral Majority, extends this traditional sexist logic to embrace a reactionary social policy which looks backward in all educational, economic and political areas. "It is easy for people today who are violating God's law and man's law to ridicule those who oppose them by simply saying, 'That fellow's repressive; he is suggesting a return to where America was fifty years ago, morally,' Falwell states. "That is exactly what I am proposing, morally."

The logical culmination of this intellectual rigidity and social backwardness was on display several weeks ago in a federal district court in Greeneville, Tennessee, where seven families sued a local school board for teaching "disrespect" for parents, the "theory of evolution", "magic" and other "un-Christian" themes. One self-proclaimed, "Born-Again Christian" plaintiff, Vicki Frost, specifically criticized a textbook which discussed Renaissance art. The objectionable sentence in the text was the following: "a central idea of the Renaissance was a belief in the dignity and worth of human beings." Frost claimed that that her passage was a form of un-Christian "humanism" which "specifically denies God as the Creator." Frost then attacked

texts for their description of the global nature of air and water as a form of dangerous "internationalism." She condemned a story about a boy who cooked at home as a negative sex role reversal, and termed a simple picture of "Jack and Jill" dancing as a possible depiction of "Satanic rites." Frost also refused to accept the presentation of non-Christian "religious views" in class textbooks, on an "equal (basis) to our own" religion. Finally, she echoed Schlafly and Falwell, in spirit if not in words: "Our children's imaginations have to be bounded."

There is no guarantee that academic freedom and intellectual integrity will prevail in this controversial case. Testifying on behalf of the local school board, Professor Robert Farr of Indiana University stated that he did not "believe there are any of the public school readers which would be acceptable to the plaintiffs." The textbooks are being defended by several prominent lawyers, including Tennessee's Advocate General William H. Farmer. However, the fundamentalist parents have the legal support of "Concerned Women of America," a Washington, D.C.-based organization established by Beverly LeHaye, wife of right wing television evangelist Tim LeHaye.

If Frost and other plaintiffs win, what next? It is only a short step to widescale book burnings and burnings, and perhaps the attempted purge from public schools and universities of faculty and administrators who do not adhere to narrow, fundamentalist beliefs. Throughout the country, Waldenbooks stores recently laid out displays of books which have been censored or banned during the past few years. Among the books are "Uncle Tom's Cabin", "Brave New World", and believe it or not, the "Living Bible." The new Bible translation was burned in Gastonia, North Carolina, in 1981 because it was allegedly a "perverted commentary on the King James version."

The intellectual poverty of the radical and religious Right is only surpassed by its intolerance of pluralism. The debate over cultural freedom in our public schools and indeed, in society as a whole, distinguishes those of us who are committed to real democracy from those social forces which wish to return to the Dark Ages.

## Letters to the Editor

### THANK YOU

I am writing this letter to express my appreciation for a letter that I was fortunate enough to have published in the July 30th edition of your paper concerning the views I hold in regards to the role of teachers in the classroom. There was a follow-up response from Ms. Mackie Fay Hill, Ph.D., Director of Learning Support Services and Minority Programming, Linfield College. I also received a letter of appreciation and agreement from Ms. Rayko Hashimoto, Early Childhood Specialist, Head Start Training Office, Portland State University. I also received a letter from Ms. Fran Gardner, who is

the Forum Editor of The Oregonian, informing me that the concerns I expressed in my letter did not meet The Oregonian's needs at this time. I guess we know whose priorities are where. Hats off to The Skanner, the Portland Observer, and educators such as Ms. Hill and Ms. Hashimoto.

As long as we have dedicated and concerned people such as you, we shall overcome. Keep on pushing.

Appreciatively,  
Curley Massey

### Letter to Ms. Fran Gardner, Forum Editor For The Oregonian

Dear Ms. Gardner:

I am writing this letter in response to a reply from you regarding a letter I wrote to the editor of your paper. I appreciate the fact that you were courteous enough to return my letter and inform me that the contents or the view that I was espousing "did not meet your need at this time." I assumed that when one takes into account the number of illiterates, the rate of high school drop outs, the astronomically high unemployment rate

among minority and poor children, the rising crime rate, the overcrowding of our prisons, these problems would meet the concerns and needs of any concerned individual in our society, whether they are a butcher, baker, candlestick maker, language arts teacher or editor of the Forum Page for The Oregonian. But I guess that relates to the fact that we all have different priorities. I don't object to not having my letter published on your Forum Page, but I certainly take offense to your statement that my point of view didn't meet your needs. It is my contention that the education of our young people should be high on our list of priorities, whether they be white, red, yellow, black, brown, rich or poor. Our ancestors might have come over on different ships, but

as far as the education or non-education of our young is concerned, we are all in the same boat.

The Portland Observer, The Skanner, and two prominent educators in our city and state felt I had hit the nail on the head, so to speak. Enclosed find copies of their responses, which I'm sure are irrelevant and do not meet your needs.

Off the top of my head two cases come to mind that get to the heart of the matter and place my concerns into proper perspective: (1) The recent death of basketball star Lynn Bias. He died from an overdose of cocaine. but to compound the situation, we find out that he was allowed to continue living on campus and to play basketball, even though he had dropped or completely failed several classes. (2) The tragic case of Billy ray Bates, who was a Portland Trailblazer basketball player at one time. He had played high school and college basketball. We learned later on that he could hardly read or write. Someone has to say enough is enough and demand that every child be given the best possible education. That's a moral obligation that we all are obligated to take responsibility for.

Sincerely,  
Curley Massey

### Response to July 30 Letter to Editor Printed in Portland Observer

#### My Appreciation

Dear Mr. Massey:

I want to express my appreciation for your Letter to the Editor which appeared in the July 30 Portland Observer.

I believe that you have presented very cogently and persuasively the very crucial role that teachers must play in meeting the educational and social/emotional

needs of young children.

Thank you for your past efforts. I hope that the coming school year will be very productive and satisfying for you and your students.

Sincerely,  
Rayko Hashimoto  
Early Childhood Education Specialist

#### Does Not Meet The Oregonian Needs

Thank you for your submission. We are sorry, but it does not meet our needs at this time.

We appreciate your interest in The Oregonian.

Sincerely, Fran Gardner Forum Editor

PORTLAND OBSERVER  \$15 for one year  
 \$25 for two years

Mr. \_\_\_\_\_  
Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_  
Ms. \_\_\_\_\_  
Miss \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ Apt \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**CLIP IT**  
TO START THE PORTLAND OBSERVER COMING EVERY WEEK

### Portland Observer

The Portland Observer (USPS 959-680) is published every Thursday by Exie Publishing Company, Inc., 1463 N.E. Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97211, Post Office Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

The Portland Observer was established in 1970.

Subscriptions: \$15.00 per year in the Tri-County area. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208.



288-0033

MEMBER  
**NATIONAL NEWSPAPER**  
Association - Founded 1885

Alfred L. Henderson, Editor/Publisher  
Al Williams, General Manager

National Advertising Representative  
Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.  
New York



## Healthwatch

by Steven Bailey, N.D.

A year ago I wrote on the potential dangers of the artificial sweetener "NutraSweet". I reported that U.S. Senator Moynihan had found that the F.D.A. had not done complete studies on human safety prior to releasing this product on the American market. In the past year Americans have consumed over 400,000 tons of this product (5.8 lbs. per person), and the reports of wide-spread health problems are coming in.

NutraSweet, the "free lunch" of low calorie sweeteners, claims to be a safe way to have your cake and eat it, too. But for many people, the absent calories have been replaced with health concerns such as headaches, menstrual problems, seizures, hyperactivity in children as well as a number of other problems being reported by NutraSweet consumers across the country. While it is difficult to directly connect the onset of these symptoms with the use of NutraSweet, the absence of symptoms upon removal of the sweetener has convinced thousands that their problems were due solely to the use of this product.

NutraSweet is a combination of three chemicals: phenylalanine and aspartic acid (both amino acids found in natural proteins) and methanol (methyl alcohol). While there exists a disease of individual sensitivity to phenylalanine called Phenylketonuria or PKU, its incidence is too rare to account for the numerous complaints associated with NutraSweet. The combination of the three substances and the effects of methanol on the human system are probably to blame for the high level of reactivity to the artificial sweetener.

Woodrow Monte, Ph.D., R.D., assistant professor of food science and director of the Food Science and Nutrition Laboratories of Arizona State University, has joined with a number of consumer groups to ask for a temporary restraining order to prohibit the F.D.A. from continuing to allow the use of Aspartame (NutraSweet) as a food additive.

Dr. Monte said, "We have documented numerous complaints from consumers who feel their consumption of Aspartame-containing products has done them harm. These complaints include seizures of a grand mal type, suicidal deep depressions, severe headaches,

mental disorientation, loss of equilibrium, speech impairment, menses (menstrual) changes mimicking early onset of menopause, visual impairment, dizziness and even a possibility of brain abscesses, and fetal (unborn) abnormalities." He goes on to charge that: "Given what is known, the authorization by FDA of Aspartame... is a regulatory license to employ American consumers as test animals."

What is known about NutraSweet is considerable. In a study by the manufacturer of NutraSweet called "Long-Term Tolerance of Aspartame by Normal Adults (E-60)" a double-blind study found "no product-related side effects" but went on to note that:

- A. There were more than three times the percentage of women complaining of menstrual cramps in the Aspartame (NutraSweet) group than the placebo.
- B. The placebo group had less than half the percentage of complaints about menses changes and general swelling than the women in the Aspartame group.
- C. While none of the women in the placebo group reported being tired or having headaches, almost 30 percent of those women consuming Aspartame reported suffering from these symptoms.

A long-term study of Aspartame intake in primates conducted by the manufacturer indicated that all animals fed medium and large doses of Aspartame developed grand mal-type seizures.

While many consumers are suffering no observable side-effects from Aspartame consumption, it is clear that this product does present some dangers to individual consumers. If you have noticed changes in your health or your children's health since consuming NutraSweet, you should consider ceasing your intake of this artificial sweetener. Cut down on your consumption of simple sugars and remember the old cliché, "There is no free lunch", for the true cost of sugar substitutes may be your long-term health.

\*Quote taken from Health Freedom News, Vol. 5, No. 7, p. 26.