

# OPINION

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## Communication Breakdown at Kendra James Forum

### Community member left with questions after attending forum

I am prompted to share my feelings about a subject in the minds of the Afro-American community, the Kendra James affair. It is almost seems like a page out of a conspiracy novel. The stage is set with the major political dignitaries and the police department.

A community forum was held to provide the community with an opportunity for their input into the shooting of Kendra James. I watched the procession of officers at Mt. Olive church present their facts, diagrams, statements and testimonies following the shooting. We saw a videoed reenactment of the shooting, supposedly how officer Scott McCollister hopped on one leg trying to remove Kendra from the vehicle until he thought that he would be caught under the car. This reenactment suggested that only as a last resort did he fired his weapon. This meeting re-

sembled a court trail with the defense showing why their client should be found innocent of a wrongful death charge and allowed to continue patrolling the streets of the Black community and entrusted with safety of the community. I have issues with the failure of the City and the police department to realize the communication style of the Black community. The presentation of the material in a pragmatic manner, without emotions, frustrated those looking for a sense of sorrow and resolution that this will not happen again.

How do we change the mindset of the

police dept that allowed them to enter the church fully armed? Is there no place that the officers and the dept feel safe in out community? The admit the possibility that law enforcement officers are nice people, however if they are all so nice why are people of color always the victims of suspicious circumstances?

Why did changing lanes and pulling a "California stop" become suspicious behavior? Does "driving while Black" ring any bells? What was the pass history of the officer involved? What did drugs have to do with it? (That information seemed to be used only to color her character and

dirty her in the eyes of the public.)

After working on combating racism and bias in the justice system in the public and private sectors, including the Understanding Racism Foundation, I am not willing to say that the shooting was not a result of the officer making a race based decision when he fired his weapon. I understand that racism exist in all offices and institutions. Combating racism requires an understanding of how White privilege, power and perceptions of people of color must be understood.

Floyd R. Cruse  
Northeast Portland

## Mayor and Police Chief Should Be Indicted

I am sickened by the recent killing of Kendra James, which like the murder of Jose Mejia Poot, is yet another injustice in a long list of murders, civil abuses and crimes by the Portland police. This is a tragic result of training officers to be trigger-happy and then unleashing them onto Portland's streets

I disagree that James' death was caused by "bad cops." Officers demonstrate a pattern of blatant disregard for the lives and right of working people. When's the last time we heard about police "accidentally" strangling a Portland West Hills resident; or pepper spraying one of Portland's well-to-do? The fact is, the job

of the men in blue is to bully and intimidate the have-nots while protecting large property owners and big business. The real corporate criminals like Enron executives who stole retirement funds, and created an energy crisis to boost utility costs. Bush and crew, who slashed our social services and Constitution in the cause of war, get away with their lawless behavior and laugh all the way to the bank. Kendra James' life was stolen, like so many before her, while the perpetrators are freed by a grand jury and the good ole boy system.

Mayor Katz and Chief Kroeker are not held accountable for the police that led to James shooting. How is this justice? The

officers involved, the chief and mayor should all be indicted by a grand jury.

The only way we can begin to curb police abuse of power is to have public oversight of their actions. We, the taxpayers, should oversee police behavior through an elected civilian review board, independent of City Hall and the police department. The board should have the authority to discipline and fire officers. If the public has no control over the police, we should not fund them. Give their budgeted allotment to Portland Public Schools and let the police hold bake sales and walk-a-thons.

Jennifer Laverduré, Radical Women

## Share the Wealth

### Bush should address AIDS pandemic during African visit



Rev. Jesse Jackson,  
President and Founder  
of the Rainbow  
Coalition

President Bush should journey to Africa for scores of reasons; however his mere presence will not be enough. The President must be prepared to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic, re-development of the continent and the promotion of peace. To date, AIDS is the single greatest global threat to human security; far more deadly than terrorism. AIDS has already taken the lives of more than 25 million people globally, three-quarters of these people in sub-Saharan Africa. The HIV/AIDS crisis is the most urgent issue facing the African continent, and the international community more broadly, and this should be the top foreign policy priority in the United States.

Secondly, the United States must be inclined to invest in Africa's development. Despite its unparalleled prosperity, the U.S. government fails to understand either its obligation or self-interest in increasing development assistance to the poorest countries in the world, from which

much of the U.S. wealth originated.

While important progress has been made toward ending some of Africa's most deadly conflicts, insecurity continues to affect millions of people, disrupting economic growth and threatening regional stability. For each of Africa's ongoing wars, a peace process already exists; what is often lacking is the international support to ensure its success. A sustained financial and diplomatic commitment from the U.S. to conflict resolution in Africa is crucial to regional and international security. The historic role that the U.S. played in destabilizing many of the African countries currently at war gives the U.S. a unique responsibility to engage with African efforts to achieve peace and stability.

In closing, one would think that Bush would seek to meet with the Congressional Black Caucus and African American scholars before his departure, for the purpose of enlightenment and clarity.

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Thank you for your support!  
Rosalind "Rosy" Foster

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## Bush Deserves Rap on Affirmative Action

NAACP executive director Julian Bond urged states that have abandoned affirmative action policies for higher education to "come back into the Union" Sunday while criticizing President Bush and his brother, Gov. Jeb Bush, for challenging race-conscious admissions.

Speaking at the 94th annual convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Bond praised the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that upheld the use of race as a factor in university admissions policies. The Bush administration filed one of the briefs opposing the policy.

The court, however, ruled against the use of a point-based system for enrollment decisions, which was used at the University of Michigan.

"The court struck down the points but upheld the principle," Bond said. "Since the opponents kept telling us that this was all about principle, I'd say we won!"

Bond said the decision "gave legal sanction to what we knew to be morally, socially, and educationally correct."

But he said he knows affirmative action policies will be continue to be challenged.

"The average KKK member may be stupid, but the well-financed forces of the radical right are not," Bond said.

He also vowed the civil rights group would be watching states, including Florida, that no longer use affirmative action policies to monitor their commitment to achieving diversity.

Bond criticized the Florida governor for his One Florida program, under which state universities can no longer consider race or gender in admissions decisions. High school students are instead guaran-

teed admission if they are in the top 20 percent of their graduating class.

"First Governor Jeb Bush became the only governor to carry out a pre-emptive strike on affirmative action," Bond said. "And then President George Bush carried out a pre-emptive strike on Iraq, the only President in our nation's history to attack a country which did not threaten or attack us first. Both strikes were unnecessary and unwise."

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