

OPINION

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Terrorized By Jimi Johnson

I was terrorized when my mother told me that a 14-year-old boy named Emmitt Till was lynched in Mississippi for looking at a white girl. I was terrorized when I watched the evening news and saw Alabama police beating black boys and girls and giving them the blues. Spraying them with fire hoses and knocking 'em to the ground. Then the dogs began biting them while they were already down. I was terrorized when Malcolm X was murdered in 1965. All he ever wanted was for us to stand up and rise! When the anguish of the black community reached a boiling point in L.A. Watts burned like wildfire and many lives were snuffed away. Again I was terrorized as tears welled up in my eyes. The war on terror is at my doorstep; land mines everywhere I dare not misstep! As police brutality ran rampant and out of control — riots in 1967 put the country on hold. I was terrorized! I screamed in terror when Martin Luther King was killed. He had prayed for peace and there was none to be found. Cities burned across America as he was laid in the ground. Once again I cried. I was terrorized! I was terrorized when police in riot gear patrolled our streets — and demanded that black people not be around, or to jail after sundown! I was terrorized when they tried to bus me to an all white school. I refused to go. I'm not the fool. When I walked into a store in a small southern town and was told "we don't serve your kind" — I got a lump in my throat and those words never left my mind! I was terrorized when the police pulled me over. They wanted to see my I.D. With hands on their guns and resentment in their eyes, I said a silent prayer. Please don't shoot me. With gangs running rapid in our neighborhoods, I'm terrorized once again but they have been terrorized too — it is still up to us to teach them what to. I was terrorized when the police murdered a young black girl named Kendra. Before my tears could dry, another young black man named Perez had to die. This is terrorism and it lives next door, across the street and around the corner in the name of law and order! I was terrorized and traumatized when the Black panthers took a fall — they stood Black and Proud and tired to help us all. I'm stunned and terrorized time and time again, to see too many young black men locked up in the pens. Second chance we got none, barely a first — destiny arranged from time of our birth. So terrorized was I — a conspiracy this must be, because one-by-one they've tried to eliminate you and me. I went to the doctor and was terrorized again. The doctor said most deadly risks are found in black men. Cancer, kidney failure and high blood pressure too — they would do the same things to us that an uzi would do! I've been terrorized in my own country — a way of life it has become. My life span has been shortened and my babies are dying too young! Terrorism has been with me like my next to kin. In the United States the healing must begin.

Jimi Johnson works for the Multnomah County Touchstone Program at Ockley Green Middle School in north Portland.



Looking for Justice

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

Michael Newby was only 19 years old when he was fatally shot in the back by a Louisville, Ken. police officer. Newby was the seventh African-American male killed by Louisville police in a seven-year time frame. In six of those cases, the offending officers got off without having to face a jury of their peers and answer for what they did.

The Newby case is different. It has the potential to bring some justice and healing to a community frustrated by judicial inaction against rogue police officers. The officer in the Newby case has been charged with murder.

Unfortunately in America, there is nothing new about African-American men being mistreated, abused and killed by police officers. From Los Angeles to Boston, police brutality against African-Americans is rampant. And typically, the offending officers are not criminally charged for their criminal behavior. Instead of these criminals facing justice, often these officers receive the benefit of excuse-making and turned eyes, while communities and families are forever destroyed.

in this sad story. Since he is no longer a member of the police force, perhaps Mattingly will not receive the protections so often afforded police officers who abuse African-Americans. As egregious as the facts are in this case, police officers have gotten away with worse. In December of 2002, two Louisville police officers shot and killed a handcuffed African-American man no less than 11 times. Neither of these officers was charged with murder and they remain employed as Louisville police officers.



Judge Greg Mathis

ever, Newby was shot in the back, not in the chest, as would have had to have been facing if he were trying to engage or shoot Mattingly. Additionally, Newby did not have a weapon in his hand when he was shot, calling into question just how Mattingly thought his life was in jeopardy. The story did not add up and Mattingly's actions were suspect — and likely criminal.

Being charged with murder is a start; it is not a finish. The protests that secured a criminal investigation and murder charge against Mattingly have to continue in order for justice to prevail. Wrong is wrong and criminal activity should be punished. Shooting someone in the back multiple times is not self-defense; it is murder. The police did not believe Mattingly's story and neither should a jury. Mattingly's charge is an important step towards justice. His conviction is essential to achieving it.

Judge Greg Mathis is chairman of the Rainbow PUSH-Excel Board and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Too often the court system and police public relations machine doubly victimize African-Americans by demonizing the victim and lionizing the police officer perpetrator.

The importance of the Newby case is that the ex-officer did not receive the benefit of police privilege. After five years, the African-American community finally achieved a positive step in the march towards justice: Officer McKenzie Mattingly was charged with the crime of murder and fired from the police department for violation of the department's use-of-force policy.

Mattingly's firing is an important distinction and positive detail

Too often the court system and police public relations machine doubly victimize African-Americans by demonizing the victim and lionizing the police officer perpetrator.

Even a spin machine, though, would have a difficult time of making sense of Mattingly's story. According to the accused murderer, Newby and he struggled. Newby was not trying to flee but moved in a way that, Mattingly alleges, made Mattingly fear for his life. How-



Making Public Schools Great for Every Child

By Reg Weaver, President, National Education Association

My work takes me into public schools in communities all across the nation. I have seen it all. Clean, modern, and safe schools with all the latest materials and technology. Not so clean, outdated, and mostly safe schools with obsolete materials and textbooks — and too often not enough of them. I've been in predominantly white schools and schools with great racial, cultural, and international diversity.

It isn't an accident that students have different levels of educational opportunity. People in affluent neighborhoods have a lot of experience and the wherewithal to make their voices heard where it counts—for example, registering and voting, getting involved in campaigns and getting to know elected officials, and making sure their children get what they need in their neighborhood public schools. The majority of people in less affluent neighborhoods have the desire and the will, but oft-times lack the resources and familiarity with how to access the system to influence the outcomes they need for their neighborhood public schools.

The primary road to influence in making your voice heard is through the political process.

We can't wait, as individuals, as families, or as a nation, to make equal educational opportunity a reality. Unless we give all children the tools to succeed, America will have faltered on its promise and condemned its future. It's that important.

In a forum on *Brown v. Board of Education* held a decade ago, George Mason University history professor Roger Wilkins said, "Lots and lots of African-Americans in this society cannot be helped by *Brown* or any other dreams or theories or lawsuits or programs until their parents can be put to work, until their families are stable, until there is hope, not only in their households, but in their neighborhoods."

That's still true today for African-Americans, Hispanics, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans and Alaskan Natives—for all Americans. Making public schools great for every child can't just be a school reform program. It has to be a parental involvement and community empowerment effort. It has to be a political movement. It has to be a coming together as one to get each and every child in America everything he or she deserves.

Let's take a giant step together. Vote on Tuesday, November 2nd.

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